

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS**  
**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH COUNCIL**  
**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8<sup>TH</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 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011, at 6:30 PM.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

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

**ABSENT:** None

Councilman Julien led the Prayer.

Jordan Dorsey, American Idol Contestant, led the Pledge of Allegiance and sang the National Anthem.

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

**Ronnie Smith/O.J. Breech – Presentation – ICU Leadership Academy**

O.J. Breech, Chairman and Managing Director of ICU Leadership Academy, commented on her program and the impact that "Yes We Can" has had on children in our community. The principal of West St. John Elementary was present and commented on how well the program is working for the kids and the parents in the school system. Ms. Breech commented that in light of the budget cuts to our local schools and the comprehensive nature of our program we are now seeking community funding and support to bridge the gaps between their original budget and the special challenges that affects the students identified for the ICU Leadership Academy Program year. In an effort to overcome certain barriers preventing community access to our learning center services and programs, we are seeking additional support funding from St. John the Baptist Parish in the amount of \$35,000.00. Funding in this amount will further our program's GEPA Compliance measures to mitigate community barriers of transportation, nutrition and/or academic-cultural enrichment activities.

**MOTION:** Councilman Lewis moved and Councilman Morris seconded the motion for discussion.

Councilman Lee stated, *"In discussion, I had a visit with Ms. Breech this afternoon. I echo her enthusiasm, which all of us that know her recognize that she has tremendous dedication and enthusiasm. A couple of short comings perhaps, the first time around to make such a request*

sometimes we make some small errors. I asked Ms. Breech if she had gone through the administration on this because in my opinion and through twenty-four years of experience, we as the Legislative body need to be coached by our administration as to whether we have the money in the budget. Whether or not there are similar programs that we are already funding. It's a complex issue. I will tell you that I am very impressed with the program and I honestly believe what the program stands for. That is that these children need help that they aren't getting and that is what this program is all about. It is not all of their fault; it may not be any of their fault. So I support you in that. As I mentioned this afternoon, I want to be consistent and very realistic, I would be re-missed to not ask administration's evaluation and recommendation of this request because it is an unbudgeted item at this time that we are asking for."

O.J. Breech stated, "I thanked you earlier today for that wisdom because what I learned a long time ago is that I am better at what I do on this side of the fence. I don't get into the politics and I will make it a point to learn how it works. I did have a chance to speak with Mrs. Robottom earlier today. I was under the assumption that once it is submitted to the parish that it goes out to everyone but I promise in the future that I will learn the protocol."

Natalie Robottom, Parish President, stated, "As an educator I want to acknowledge that everything Ms. Breech has said I have experienced. I understand the need for these types of programs. I understand the need for the funding. Ms. Breech and I did have a conversation this morning and it was very simple that this was listed as a presentation. As an administration we were not prepared to address it as a request for funding but I did offer her the opportunity to come and sit with us to discuss bringing it before the council in a way that would have been a request. We are not prepared to address it as a request tonight however we do offer the opportunity to meet with Ms. Breech. We did talk briefly on the phone about the need for all of us to consolidate some of our spending and looking forward we will be coming back to you because of some short falls we have in some of our programs that will be very important to address but as a process. It is something that we have avoided doing by bringing things to you under any and all finances. We try to publicize what it is that we are going to request so that the public is aware. We were under the impression that it was a presentation. Which is why it is located on this part of the agenda but we will be happy to sit with Ms. Breech and any of the representatives that she has to go through that program and look at where we may possibly be able to help and at that point we will bring that before the council."

O.J. Breech stated, "I will say also again and my apology of the protocol but it was presented in the packet as a funding request. I did not realize that it was put on the agenda as a presentation. So that was a slight error."

Councilman Lee stated, "With that in mind, I am looking around the table and I think we are all on the same page as well as the administration. I would like to offer a substitute motion that being that we request that Ms. Breech and her leadership committee meet with the administration to discuss the merits of an actual funding of the project and while I have the opportunity I will also ask that we get it

*is an educational program, I am assuming that the school board is participating in this at this point."*

*O.J. Breech stated, "Absolutely, they have been wonderful in helping us to subsidize costs with the YWC program that we needed in the beginning. So they have been helping us tremendously."*

*Councilman Lee stated, "Good because they are our partners obviously in such a deal. So that would be my motion Mr. Smith that we ask Ms. Breech to go to the administration for evaluation and a recommendation from administration."*

*Councilman Lewis stated, "Mr. Lee I don't have a problem with that at all because I told Ms. Breech the same thing you said to check with administration and make sure everything is alright because it is going to be hard for us to vote for it if administration has a problem with it."*

*Councilman Morris asked, "I would like to know can you tell us the exact amount the school board has contributed?"*

*O.J. Breech stated, "Well the way that the school board has been contributing to the program is through in kind services. At one point when I came to you in the summer we were having a need for transportation so as we sat down and looked at it there were some transportation services that they provided and I covered the rest. So we did some 50/50 as well as with accepting some of their teachers into the program as opposed to all of the money. We found creative ways to make it happen so that we could make sure that all the kids were served and no one was left out."*

*Councilman Smith stated, "Mr. Lee I have to apologize because I put that on the agenda as a presentation."*

**SUBSTITUTE MOTION:** Councilman Lee moved and Councilman Millet seconded the motion that Ms. Breech and her leadership committee meet with administration for an evaluation and a recommendation from administration. The motion passed unanimously.

**Ronnie Smith – Presentation – JAG – ESJ High School**

*Jennifer Bowers, President of the Jobs for American Graduates Program, stated, "JAG is a program to help High School students that may have some barriers overcome them and graduate. The objective of JAG is to help high school students graduate with a high school diploma and then go on to pursue a post secondary schooling. This is currently the first year JAG has been at East St. John High School. It was previously an out of school program in St. John Parish. We have done many great things this year. The major project that we are working on right now is our craft show also featuring an auto show which will be this weekend on Saturday, February 12<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 AM until 5:00 PM. We are encouraging everyone to come out and support us. We have been striving to get sponsors and vendors. We truly believe this will be a great fund raiser and also a great way to bring the school and the community together. We want to show everybody that East St. John High School is doing great things and is offering a lot to both the students and the community. Please come out and join us this weekend at the first annual*

arts and crafts show."

Glenda Gaines, Career Specialist for JAG, stated, "Mr. Smith, we are not soliciting money, but we will accept. I am very excited about the kids that I get to work with. Again, as Jennifer said, we are doing a lot of great things at East St. John High School. So please come out and support us in this endeavor on Saturday. Thank you."

Audrey Alexis, Event Planner, stated, "I was called in by the students at East St. John to plan an event for them. I was so amazed at what they were doing because they wanted to raise money themselves and this is inspirational for me because I believe that with children we need to hear what they have to say and so what they are saying is that they need help. They need support. There are a lot of great minds at East St. John High. So with Mrs. Triche's support we have the whole school. We have motorcycles, cars, vendor booths; food booths, everything and they are going to have a second line band. We just ask you all to come out and support these children. I know everybody in here I think is some type of former graduate of East St. John. So let's turn some of this negative around in St. John Parish and put it into a positive aspect and support these children in what they are trying to do. Thank you very much for your time."

#### **Natalie Robottom – Recognition – Quinn Johnson – Green Bay Packers**

Natalie Robottom stated, "You know as a catholic I have been attending Baptist church and learning to claim what you wish. As I sat working on my minutes for this meeting tonight having spoken with Quinn on Saturday and his mother on Friday and wishing him the best of luck. Whether any of you remember it or not Quinn was paraded here for being a Biddy Basketball champion as part of our Recreation Program so he is a year older than my son. I have been knowing and watching him and his winning ways because he has always been on winning teams for a number of years. I typed my notes and they were very specific, it was to recognize Quinn Johnson, native of Edgard and member of the Championship Green Bay Packer team. As I started watching the game I didn't want to jinx him. I thought about going back and editing it out and waiting until after the game but I had that confidence and I left it. Sure enough we are here tonight to recognize one of our own Quinn Johnson who is a member of the Green Bay Packer Super Bowl Championship team from Edgard, Louisiana. He was a member of the Rams State Championship team. He was a member of the LSU Tiger Sugar Bowl and National Championship team and now he has moved on to world championship. I did have a brief conversation with him. He is looking forward to coming home. We are hoping to be able to welcome him in the manner that he deserves. We have it posted on our electronic signs. He is into the face book thing and we have made a couple of exchanges but I only do that when I get home at night so I am hoping to hear back from him but we definitely want to recognize him for all of his achievements as well as his family who has been up there supporting him and we are looking forward to having him come back and visit."

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

The above item will be carried over to the next agenda.

**Natalie Robottom – Presentation – YMCA Presentation – Lou Johnson, River Parish YMCA Senior Program Coordinator; Chris Guidry, YMCA Board Chairman; David Ozmore, Executive Director YMCA of Greater New Orleans**

Lou Johnson, YMCA Senior Program Coordinator, commented briefly on the historical perspective of the River Parishes YMCA. They have a functioning board. They have a facility and are doing things in the community to help our kids as well. They have been very active with the parish and partnering with the parish and working to plan continued partnerships between them and our recreation program. The program was playing a big part in St. John the Baptist Parish for about 15 years before Hurricane Katrina. After the hurricane, there was a shift in demographics and I actually ended up in Chicago. When Katrina happened in New Orleans I was the Director of Education for the YMCA of Greater New Orleans and had a branch totally devoted to adult and family literacy work and worked in 8 parishes in and around the Greater New Orleans area. Well when Katrina happened all of that went by the waste side because the people weren't there anymore. I almost went to work in Chicago for them because that is where I landed post Katrina. One day my phone went off and they said Lou come on home, we have worked something out that you can start a Y in the River Parishes. So I came home and began the process of establishing a River Parishes YMCA. My directives were simple. My boss at the time indicated that I needed to get a commitment for \$100,000.00 over a three year period and create a board. I set about establishing a founders committee that morphed into a board. We began the work of bringing a YMCA to the River Parishes and one of the things that we did was utilizing already existing relationships that I had. I talked to Dean Torres. I talked to the folks at St. Charles United Way and we were able to get together some funding and support and this was in early 2006 and we came out to the River Parishes to begin this process. I would like to dispel a myth that started when I came. The myth was that I or the YMCA had come to take over St. John Recreation and that wasn't true then and five years hence, it is still not true. What we do is we did a survey and the survey said that there was a need and the need was for services for youth. So we set about with the help of the United Way establishing a youth activity center. We did it in partnership. We believe in partnership. We did it in partnership with New Wine Christian Fellowship. They had a space that was being under utilized. We had a program that needed a home and it worked out well for us to take over the old K-Mart building and then Hurricane Gustav happened and took the roof off of the building and set us back. Well not being deterred by that we kept moving forward. We moved into a smaller building and kept serving the community. What we have at the center is an after school program. It is a safe place for kids to come. Mr. Smith has been there. We have worked with every administration going back to the Monica administration about trying to figure out how the YMCA and the parish could partner together. We partner with the schools with youth programs. In fact for our summer camp the schools provide the busses to get the kids to the various things that we take them to for field trips. What we are doing is the things that we saw where the needs were not being met. Our programs work with teens. We focused on the teens because that is what the survey said. We in our summer camp this past year hired a dance instructor because we wanted to introduce dance and movement to the kids and we did it not just for the teens but we paid the instructor and she worked with the kids on the move program which is for the kids from age 4-12 because again it is about partnership and

about looking at what we can do as a collective and how can we drive some energies around functioning as a collective rather than functioning in silence. So since that small beginning we have done what I think are some exceptional things here in the parish. We took kids to the Hornets game. We do that because we get resources. The Christmas of 2009 we gave out 80 pairs of athletic shoes because a company gave 10,000 pairs of shoes to the YMCA of the USA. We just got a shipment in from Hasbro. We are going to be doing game nights with kids on Fridays and Saturdays. We took kids from this community to North Carolina to Leader School. We received a letter from a grandparent praising our accomplishments with their grandson. Under these conditions our youth will no doubt go on to greatness. We have a vision for the River Parishes YMCA and a strategic plan that calls for the development. We would like to develop that site as a facility and be able to bring the full breath of YMCA program. Mr. David Ozmore, Executive Director YMCA of Greater New Orleans commented that the YMCA wants to provide a facility that focuses on healthy living for children, teens, adults and seniors. They want to have everyone coming together for exercise and fellowship. Thirdly is social responsibility, literacy is a cause of ours in St. John Parish. They serve from Venice to Covington, eight parishes. They currently have six branches, two full facilities and in 2015 they will have twenty program centers and eleven full service YMCA facilities across the region, one being LaPlace. Thank you for the opportunity to be here tonight.

**Natalie Robottom – Recognition – 30 years of service or more to the parish. Willie McGee – 32 years, Linda Johnson – 32 years, Louis Cortez – 31 years of service**

*Natalie Robottom stated, "Council members many of you may know some of the individuals that we are going to recognize. There are actually three of them listed and one was unable to attend but we will definitely get him his award. We are going to start with Mrs. Linda Johnson. Mrs. Johnson was a case worker assistant. She just recently retired. We will allow her to come up here. You may not have had an opportunity to visit too much with Mrs. Johnson because she worked at the Health Unit for most of her time here. What I would like to do is present her with this plaque. She served for 32 years. Linda Johnson, case worker assistant in appreciation of 32 years of outstanding service given to the State of Louisiana and St. John the Baptist Parish Health Unit, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 1977 through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010, presented by St. John the Baptist Parish President and the Council. This was something started last year by this council and we thought it was a wonderful idea and we would like to continue it moving forward. So Mrs. Johnson, on our behalf, we want to say thank you for your years of service and hope that you are enjoying your retirement."*

*Linda Johnson stated, "I just want to say that I really enjoyed working with the parish. It has been a tremendous opportunity for me because it gave me the opportunity to meet new people everyday. I started here when, I think it was Mr. McTopy that hired me and I have been here all that time and I really enjoyed the work. I kind of hated to leave but I had to go. Thank you."*

*Natalie Robottom stated, "The next presentation is actually for one of our employees who retired a little while ago but this was before we started this process and we thought it was important to have Mr. Louis*

Cortez come back. Mr. Cortez worked as one of our water treatment plant supervisors and was actually with the parish for thirty-one years. I will read the plaque it says presented to Louis Cortez, water treatment supervisor, in appreciation of thirty-one years of outstanding service given to the St. John Parish Utilities Department, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 1972 through October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2003, presented by St. John the Baptist Parish President and the Parish Council. I think this has been a long time coming. We received a few notes after we got in and we thought it was a great opportunity to thank everyone for their services."

Louis Cortez stated, "It has been a great honor and privilege to serve St. John the Baptist Parish for all these many years, especially the West Bank, my home town. Now I have something physical to share with my wife, my children, my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren. Again it has been a pleasure and a special thank you to the Councilman in my district, Mr. Haston Lewis. Thank you very much."

Natalie Robottom stated, "You know sometimes we take for granted that people are actually here serving and without any intentions of leaving out anybody we actually started the process of acknowledging through service awards all of our employees. So we are very fortunate to have these two employees that exceeded thirty years but we have others who are just starting their service to St. John Parish and moving forward we would like to recognize them through our staff meetings for five, ten, fifteen or twenty years of service. We did that for the first time and they were very excited and pleased and like Mr. Cortez said after you have given this much time to a parish and basically it has been your life, you would like to leave with something. That is a very small token of appreciation but please know that your service didn't go unnoticed and we appreciate it and thank you for coming back for us tonight. There was also Mr. Willie McGee who couldn't be here tonight and we will get his plaque to him. We would like to do this at the beginning of the year for our retirees and are looking forward to doing this again in the near future."

#### **Natalie Robottom – Proclamation – Black History Month**

Natalie Robottom stated, "Whereas, February is celebrated as "Black History Month" commemorating the significant events and achievements of the African American population of the United States of America and; Whereas, Black History Month is a time for all Americans to remember the stories and teachings of those who helped build our nation, took a stand against injustice to build lives of dignity and opportunity, advanced the cause of civil rights and strengthened families and communities and; Whereas, African Americans in St. John the Baptist Parish and throughout the United States have played specific roles in the economic, cultural, spiritual and political development, while working tirelessly to maintain and promote their culture and history and; Whereas, as a result of their determination, hard work, intelligence and perseverance African Americans have made valuable and lasting contributions achieving exceptional success in all aspects of society including business, education, politics, science and the arts and; Whereas, we recognize and have great appreciation for the amazing achievements of African Americans in the United States of America and; Whereas, in honor of the courage and contributions made by African Americans throughout St. John the Baptist Parish and the United States of America. We ask our residents to join with us in celebrating the

*diversity and character of our community and highlight the importance of sharing our culture, customs and traditions with those around us. Now therefore I, Natalie Robottom, Parish President, in conjunction with the St. John the Baptist Council Members do hereby proclaim the month of February 2011 as Black History Month in St. John the Baptist Parish."*

### **Consent Agenda**

**Items:** Approval of Minutes January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011, Regular Meeting; Councilman Morris – Re-Appointment of Kurt Becnel to the P&Z Commission; Councilman Morris – Re-appointment of Chester Borne to the ZBA; Councilwoman Hotard added the Re-appointment of Carl Freeman to the ZBA.

**MOTION:** Councilman Lee moved and Councilwoman Usry seconded the motion to approve the amended consent agenda items consisting of Approval of Minutes January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011, Regular Meeting; Councilman Morris – Re-Appointment of Kurt Becnel to the P&Z Commission; Councilman Morris – Re-appointment of Chester Borne to the ZBA; Councilwoman Hotard – Re-appointment of Carl Freeman to the ZBA. The motion passed unanimously.

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

There were no ordinances at this time.

### **INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES:**

**11-06** 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)

**11-07** 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)

### **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:** Councilwoman Millet moved and Councilman Morris seconded the motion to accept the recommendation of the finance committee. The committee approved to accept the recommendation of the District Attorney representing administration to leave items one and two on the table as a result of pending litigation, approved to accept administrations recommendation and award the bid for building materials & supplies for Weatherization Program related to ARRA & regular DOE Weatherization Programs to Home Depot of LaPlace, approved to accept administrations recommendation and award the bid for labor/service &

materials for installation of Insulation related to ARRA & regular DOE Weatherization Programs to Brotherhood Way of Metairie, approved to extend the contract with Guidry & Associates for a two year term from February 1, 2011 for state and federal work as deemed by the council and administration, approved to renew the contract with LarMar Video Productions, Inc. for the taping of the council meetings 2011 and 2012, approved to grant administration authorization to go out for bids for the Annual contract for Reverse Osmosis Membrane Filters, approved to grant administration authorization to go out for bids for the Homewood drainage project, approved to grant administration authorization to sign a State/Parish Maintenance Agreement between the Department of Transportation and Development and St. John the Baptist Parish for the interchange lighting project at I-10 and Belle Terre Blvd (LA 3188), approved to grant change order #1 for Shread-Kuyrkendall in the amount of \$5,133.69 for re-bidding of the Riverlands drainage project, approved to grant administration authorization to execute a contract for the canal permitting process with Royal Engineering for an amount not to exceed \$48,000.00, approved to grant administration authorization to execute a contract for the canal permitting process with Krebs, LaSalle, Lamieux Consultants, Inc. for an amount not to exceed \$50,000.00, approved to override the chair not to allow public comment on a finance item that is being presented at this time (re-apportionment contract), and approved to table the item on re-apportionment. The motion passed unanimously.

**DEPARTMENT/ENGINEER REPORTS:**

**Cheryl Millet – Update on East Bank Farmer’s Market**

Councilwoman Millet stated, *“At this time I am going to wait and see how the West Bank Farmer’s Market goes before we proceed with the East Bank. It isn’t that we are going to forget about it, we just want to go ahead and do one at a time and see how that works and concentrate our efforts together on one to see how that works out.”*

**Charles Julien – Homewood & Central Avenue drainage**

Councilman Julien stated, *“This item was put there just to inform the residents of Central Avenue and the Reserve Homewood area of the work that we are doing to alleviate the drainage problems that we have had. I want to commend administration for working as hard as they have at trying to get this done. Thank you.”*

**Haston Lewis/Jaclyn Hotard – Update on Milesville/Old LaPlace drainage**

Councilwoman Hotard stated, *“I just wanted to get an update. I know we had the Balsam Street project which did actually alleviate a lot of the problems there but I know we still had some other concerns around LaPlace Medical Center in that area when we get some rains. If we could just get an update as to where we are with all of the little kind of problem areas in that low area right there.”*

Mike Carmouche, Special Projects Manager, stated, *“I think it was either the last meeting or the one before that you approved construction for this project and it should be getting underway in the middle of February. That is the Persimmon project.”*

Councilwoman Hotard asked, "Isn't Persimmon going to address more on the St. Joan of Arc side?"

Mike Carmouche stated, "No that is going to address the St. Joan of Arc side, Persimmon Street and Milesville area."

Councilwoman Hotard asked, "Okay and then Balsam that is already completed correct?"

Mike Carmouche stated, "That is correct."

**Jaclyn Hotard/Haston Lewis – Update on sidewalks on W. 5<sup>th</sup> Street in the Milesville area**

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "I placed this item on the agenda, we actually had some discussions a while back about they were installing some new sidewalks on the, well I guess sometimes the way I see it is that one side of W. 5<sup>th</sup> Street gets treated differently and maybe it is just my perception but we have some new sidewalks that got installed on one side of W. 5<sup>th</sup> and we didn't get the same thing on the other side. Through some of the discussions we learned that some of it was through some grants and things like that. So I just wanted to see if we can pursue some of those same grants. I spoke with Mrs. Robottom and some of them have to do with proximity to schools and those types of things which I know we have St. Joan of Arc right there so maybe we can look at some of that and then also maybe just target the sidewalks that actually just need repair or replacement or have been overgrown with grass just so that we can have that continuity when you go from one end of the W. 5<sup>th</sup> to the other end that it does look the same. It doesn't look like we are neglecting one end of it and taking care of the other end of it."

Councilwoman Usry stated, "I live on the other end of W. 5<sup>th</sup> Street and represent the other end. It wasn't any grants that we got. My district didn't get an overlaid street or any extra money spent except on the sidewalks. That was my request that we update the sidewalks and so maybe you might need to take that into consideration."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "No there was something I know that..."

Councilwoman Usry stated, "There was a school one but we never received the grant."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "Okay maybe that was the one that Natalie and I had talked about maybe we can look at pursuing some of that."

Natalie Robottom stated, "We will. What we would like to say is that we hear you. Sidewalks were installed on a lot of state roads years ago. Many of them are not in bad shape. Some of them just need some maintenance but there are other areas that were safety hazards. It was my understanding that this initial piece was a concern because of safety but we have started to evaluate some of the routes. I think part of the restoration to the historic districts contains some sidewalk work. We looked at, Ms. Hotard, the rest of W. 5<sup>th</sup> and it looks like there is a need for us to partner with some other folks. We are obviously going to do a huge clean up in April with clean sweep but we would like to get with the Sheriff's office for assistance from their

crews for maybe for instance some of them are just overgrown and you can no longer tell there was a sidewalk. On the West Bank that is the case as well Mr. Lewis. There are sidewalks there but they are pretty much overgrown in the areas that people use them. We are probably going to start where the people walk along the street. On W. 5<sup>th</sup> that area that we are working on first, there is a lot of traffic there either to the school or to Red & White. We understand there is traffic going the other way and we will make every effort to take care of that. We have applied for and we are going to ask for your support for Resolution's for safe route to school grants, again those are the ones that must have a certain population. They have to be a certain proximity to schools. The purpose is to allow students to walk safely to school. Those funds will not be enough to cover everything. So we do want to make sure that we cover every area however it just so happens that was a request from Mrs. Usry for her district rather than streets, she wanted sidewalks. So we will continue to work with all of you in making improvements throughout the parish."

Councilman Lewis stated, "I think we need to look at sidewalks throughout the parish especially where people walk regularly over there where they don't have transportation."

#### **Haston Lewis – Update on West Bank Park**

Councilman Lewis stated, "No I have a couple of other ones before that. I must have missed drainage. I would like to go back to drainage. I tell you what I was waiting on the bid for the project down in the Milesville area. In that area there we have a pump on Persimmon Street. That pump has been there for about twenty-five years and it looks like it still can't get water out of Milesville, Pineville and Satsuma Street and we are talking about bringing more water in there and putting up another pump. I want to make sure that the pump there is working and the other one that we are bringing into Milesville that it can handle the water too because if we are going to divert water into that area over there where it is already low and we can't move it those people are going to drown in there. Another thing if you ride around Milesville especially from Cardinal all the way to the DuPont curve. If you go back on those streets, no culverts have been placed in these areas for years and years. You need to go up in there and see the drainage situation there. We need to do something with that. Not just go ahead and put those pumping stations in there and relieve some areas because all we are going to be doing is moving water around and make sure the pump that we put in there can take care of the water that we are bringing in there plus the water that is already there because if we are bringing more water in there that isn't going to do any good those people are going to drown worse than what they already are in that area. I think we definitely need to do something about that. I want to see some culverts go down just don't put the pump there. I want to see those people drain off in that area."

Natalie Robottom stated, "I think Mr. Carmouche may have a little bit more information on the specific project. Clearly we don't want to cause any problems and there may be an addition of a pump there but I will let him address this."

Mike Carmouche stated, "First of all Mr. Lewis on December 8<sup>th</sup>, Persimmon Street had about two and a half feet of water over the pump

station. Since that time we have made improvements to that pump station and that hasn't happened since. We have fixed that problem. As far as the other parts of Miesville around Spruce Street and the Red Bud area, we are addressing that area with culverts. We are addressing Persimmon Street with culverts, Fir St. and Capt. Bourgeois with culverts. It is more than just one particular area. We are taking care of the whole area and by relieving south of the railroad track anything north of Airline Highway will be relieved automatically because we will be pumping the water in the Miesville area into the river. So it will get out of there a lot quicker than it has been and it is going to work. It will be great."

Councilman Lewis stated, "I am going to be fair with you all and I am going to tell you I am going to be on top of that job you are going to swear that I work over here. I am not going to sit by and let you, you already told me that the water hasn't been bad since, well it hasn't rained bad since either, you didn't say that."

Mike Carmouche stated, "I tend to disagree with you Mr. Lewis. I go out with every rain. I video tape and take pictures. I watch that rain."

Councilman Lewis stated, "I got pictures too. I will bring them for the next meeting. I'm not taking that I can tell you."

Councilman Morris stated, "Mr. Lewis I basically grew up in that area and I am very familiar with the problems. I have went through this project with Mr. Carmouche before I was a councilman and I am planning on when I leave the council overseeing this project because I worked closely with him and one of the biggest problems that we discovered and I knew and at that time nobody would listen under the state highway the culvert is like an eighteen inch arch pipe and you have a forty-eight inch going into a sixty but in the middle it is reduced. So that is part of this project. So it is bits and pieces all over this area that is going to improve it. Like I said I am familiar with the project. I have gone over it extent fully with Mr. Carmouche. I think it is going to work fine and alleviate a lot of the problems in that area."

Councilman Lewis stated, "Gentlemen I have big trouble on the West Bank with that Complex. It holds a lot of water. It has swales all over the front of the park and it holds a lot of water. They say they are going to put some culverts there or some pipes. Anytime you are on a hill and you are cutting a hole in that hill and there is the front of the park and the baseball park is in the back there and you have a swale that goes through there about eight feet wide and four feet deep and the level from the front of the park to the baseball field and I know why the swale is there to slow the water down because when it gets to the end of the swale they are going down to an eight inch pipe. Why are we going to put a big swale on a hill inside the front of a park if it don't hold water. Secondly what we did was build a walk way around the park and they have a building that is supposed to be built in the center of that walk way. Wouldn't you build the building first and then put the walk way afterwards? We didn't do that right. You all need to visit that park and see the condition it is in. That was bad money spent. I don't care what anybody tells me. What I need to do is take our engineer and let him do a punch list on that park."

C.J. Savoie, Parish Engineer, stated, "You split the program management

*into two sections, I will be glad to go as parish engineer but this has been split into two sections and the program manager for that is another engineering firm."*

Councilman Smith asked, "Could you please contact that engineer, as the parish engineer, and have them go out with Mr. Lewis and accommodate him on what he needs?"

C.J. Savoie stated, "I would be glad to and I will go out there also with Mr. Lewis."

Councilman Lewis stated, "I would like to see a punch list on that park anyways. I wish I could get a punch list on the very first beginning of that park. If you look at the diagrams and the drawings on that park and you look at what went on in that park, it is not right and I know what I am talking about. I am no engineer but it isn't hard to see."

Councilman Morris stated, "In defense of administration and Mr. Lewis, I walked the park when it was raining with Mr. Bailey. Mr. Haston wasn't available. We discussed that administration is going to go in and close a lot of the swales up because that was the immediate concern. I apologize, Mr. Lewis if I didn't get with you on that but we walked and we stayed over there for like an hour. I even walked the path. The part about the walkway and the atrium going in the center, we brought that up but that was part of the old administration and that was something that was here and that is something that I agree with totally because the airnasium is going in the center and the walk way is there. So we are going to have to actually break up the walk way to get to the construction so it is like we are going to be paying for it twice in a section but that was before and there is nothing that we can do about it. It is there and we have to live with it but a lot of the swales from my understanding and talking with administration at that time when we walked with Mr. Bailey they are going to close it in and eliminate a lot of the problems that Mr. Haston is concerned about but he is absolutely correct. If it stays the way it is it will be a big problem."

Councilman Lewis stated, "Listen at me good, if the engineer put the swales there and we are going to remove them, who is right the engineer or us? You see in the little program they have a word on them drawings that says 'others'. I see who others, is. Others is, us, who don't know what we are doing. I don't take that back because that is not right."

**OLD BUSINESS:**

There was no old business.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Marie Brown-Mercadel – Resolution R11-02 – A Resolution in support of the Economic Development Department to the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Business Enterprise Grant for funding to construct a Farmer's Market at 5793 Highway 18 in Wallace, LA**

Marie Brown-Mercadel stated, "We have been talking about the Farmer's market for the last two meetings and we are coming back before this council today to ask for authorization to submit the grant application

for \$99,999.00 to the United States Department of Agriculture. This grant is to construct a farmer's market on Hwy. 18 in Wallace. We have received the environmental review and the letters of no objection for the farmer's market."

**MOTION:** Councilman Lewis moved and Councilman Morris seconded the motion to approve Resolution R11-02. A Resolution in support of the Economic Development Department to the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Business Enterprise Grant for funding to construct a Farmer's Market at 5793 Highway 18 in Wallace, LA. **WHEREAS**, St. John the Baptist Parish Department of Economic Development is submitting an application for 2011-2012 funds in the amount of \$99,999.00 from the United States Department of Agriculture; and **WHEREAS**, the United States Department of Agriculture supports a resolution from the local governing body; and **WHEREAS**, upon funding, the program is to support the development of small and emerging private businesses in rural communities. **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the members of the St. John the Baptist Parish Council do hereby approve and support the St. John Parish application for 2010-2011 United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Business Enterprise. The motion passed unanimously.

**Marie Brown-Mercadel – Resolution R11-03 – A Resolution authorizing St. John the Baptist Parish to submit a grant application for the "Safe Routes to Schools Program"**

Marie Brown-Mercadel stated, "We were just referencing this earlier. We have been in contact with the school and they have asked us to apply for the grant for East St. John Elementary and LaPlace Elementary. There is one correction to the admit report the funding available is up to \$250,000.00 and not \$25,000.00 and the eligible expenses include activities that are going to improve pedestrian safety by adding sidewalks, lighting and crossing marks to allow children to more safely walk to and from school."

**MOTION:** Councilman Julien moved and Councilwoman Usry seconded the motion to approve Resolution R11-03. 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 LaPlace Elementary and 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 LaPlace Elementary and East St. John Elementary Schools; 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.

**Ronnie Smith – Changing of the Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011 Council Meeting to Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011 in Edgard due to the Mardi Gras Holiday**

**MOTION:** Councilwoman Usry moved and Councilwoman Millet seconded the motion to change the Council meeting of Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011 to Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011 in Edgard due to the Mardi Gras Holiday. The motion passed unanimously.

**CORRESPONDANCE/COUNCIL BRIEFS**

Councilman Julien stated, "I want to encourage the people of Reserve to come and visit the Reserve Library. It has been done over and they did a great job. I also want to tell Mrs. Linda, you do have time to cook the gumbo. I did miss the party but I want my gumbo and congratulations to you to Mr. Cortez. You all have a nice night."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "I was given a notice by LaPlace Elementary School. They are going to begin pouring concrete for the new school starting tomorrow and they will be pouring this concrete from 1:00 in the morning until 8:00 in the morning for the next six weeks, weather permitting. They are asking for our patience in the process. They are doing this to avoid disturbing the kids during the class room hours. So those that live around the school don't be surprised if cement trucks are going in the middle of the night there is a reason for it. Also St. Timothy's is promoting their community garden. It is located at the corner of Madewood and Belle Alliance at the St. Timothy Episcopal Church. It is to serve the residents of the area. All residents are able to take a section of the ground and produce their own gardens if they so choose to. For further information please contact Mrs. Ruth at 652-2983."

Councilman Lee stated, "I have one and I would ask that the council bare with me on this particular item. Normally I would never ask for such action or a motion if the issue wasn't presented as an agenda item but I feel very strongly about what I am getting ready to propose so hear me out on this. I had hoped and thought that perhaps we would have an agenda item by now. All of you around this table know that come July we will be dealing with a very important service issue for St. John Parish that would be the renewal of our garbage contract. I am not sure of the exact date but it is something that I believe needs to be pitched out now. It doesn't need to be discussed at length. It is not an agenda item. What I am asking this council to do because I believe I am speaking on behalf of administration is I am making a motion to direct administration to deliver to this council a RFP documentation for our approval to go out to test the market place for garbage services. I don't want there to be any misunderstanding. My motion is to direct administration to begin work and deliver a RFP documentation to this council for our approval to test the market place for garbage services."

**MOTION:** Councilman Lee moved and Councilman Lewis seconded the motion to direct administration to begin work and deliver a RFP documentation to this council for our approval to test the market place for garbage services. The motion passed unanimously.

Councilman Lee stated, "I just want to thank the council again. I

apologize. I hate making a motion like that with it not being an agenda item."

Councilman Julien stated, "I forgot for Valentine's Day I just want to tell my valentine Latoya Julien that I Love you and Happy early Valentine's Day."

Councilman Smith stated, "First of all Mrs. Millet I owe you an apology."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "I accept."

Councilman Smith stated, "Thank you. I raised my voice at Mrs. Millet tonight and that was totally unprofessional. I have my daughter in the audience and I wouldn't want anybody to raise their voice at her and that was a bad example for me to set for my daughter and anybody else that is watching. So I do apologize. To everybody else I am glad Mr. Julien wished his valentine a Happy Valentine's Day. I am wishing every female viewer out there a Happy Valentine's Day, especially my baby. Also I want to reiterate from earlier tonight the JAG program is having a mini fair at ESJ High School this Saturday. They are going to have a motorcycle and car show there. They are going to have arts and crafts and food. So please come out and support the JAG program at ESJ High School. Also I am inviting everybody to East St. John on Friday evening at 7:00 PM the varsity team should be playing for the district championship."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "I have to wish a Happy Valentine to someone who just sent me a text message and said I feel very upset that you didn't tell me Happy Valentine's Day. So I won't say any names but obviously somebody is watching and texting, so Happy Valentine's Day to you too. I will leave the names out to protect the innocent."

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

Natalie Robottom stated, "I want to once again congratulate Quinn Johnson for being a member of our Super Bowl team. Hopefully he will have an opportunity to come and address you. If you noticed we are all wearing the red dresses on our lapels and that is in dedication of woman's heart and health awareness which is this month. It is go red for woman in addition to the Valentine's thing. According to the American Heart Association ninety percent of woman have one or more risk factors developing from heart disease and it is the number one cause of death among women twenty and older. Next week we would like to acknowledge that Mr. Glenn Smith will be serving as King of the Mystic Krewe of Louisianans in Washington. His queen is Lea Aucoin, whose father is Paul Aucoin and is the chairman of our tourist commission and an attorney in St. James Parish. They are featuring the River Parishes and it is an economic development opportunity for us to reach out to areas outside of our immediate area and we are going to do everything we can to make sure that the economic opportunities are put out there in a manner that you would wish. On behalf of myself and the parish council we would like to congratulate both King Smith and Queen Lea and wish them a most enjoyable reign. All of you know that the 2010 census numbers were released last week and St. John the Baptist Parish had a 6.7% growth which was about 2,880 increase, growth was noted in LaPlace, Reserve and Wallace while there is a slight decrease in

Edgard. We haven't gotten the official numbers but these are going to be very important when it comes to the redistricting plan. We discussed earlier and I know we didn't resolve it but our intentions are to make sure that our council members are involved in that process. For me personally the lines won't affect me but there is an impact on you and your residents and we want to make sure that your participation is garnered in that process but again these are the numbers that we are dealing with. Obviously the areas impacted will have some impact on where those lines are drawn and we want to make sure to consider everyone when we make the final adjustments. We want to thank everyone who came out and participated in the meet the pharmacist day at the YMCA. They were one of our partners. We want to thank Entergy, Gem Drugs, CVS and we also had participation from Xavier University. Their dean was on hand, other pharmacist from Xavier, as well as students. We are looking forward to the event growing and becoming bigger and better over the next year and the years to come. We were also sponsors for the kick off for relay for life, that event is scheduled for Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> at Riverside Academy. They are still soliciting teams and sponsors for the event. So if you are interested please contact the chair, Angelle Boudreaux, at [stjohnrelayforlife@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnrelayforlife@gmail.com) or co-chair Michael Wright at 985-703-2444 or you can visit them on face book for more information. This is an event that I think was typically held at ESJ and now it is going to be at Riverside. It is still very important to support relay for life so that we can continue to fund research. At our last meeting we had Mr. Wisher promoting the Senior Olympics and there is going to be an opportunity for participation coming forward for April 5<sup>th</sup> through May 7<sup>th</sup> the event is open to St. John residents 50 years or older and you can contact the Council on Aging for more information about that. Congratulations to our committee for Keep St. John Beautiful, they received the president's circle award last year for their clean up efforts and we are going to be asking for more participation this coming year. We are going to be asking for more club or school members because you can get service hours for participating. The tentative date for this clean up is going to be April 16<sup>th</sup> and again we want all of our associations to participate to help clean up. The toll free number previously serving Garyville, Reserve and the West Bank had been discontinued when we moved to a new phone system. I would like to announce that it has been reinstated. The number is 985-536-4274. So residents from those areas can now call toll free and we will direct the calls where they are needed. It is the same number from before. Next Saturday the Reserve Library is scheduling an open house February 19<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 until 11:30 and they are inviting everyone to come out and see the newly renovated library. A reminder the ferry is up and running. We made contact with the Ferry Captain and right now they are serving 500 to 600 riders per day. That is good but we need to continue to keep it that way so that they can be no discussion as to whether or not that ferry is needed. So it is up and running and we need you to continue to ride it. We want to see those numbers increase. Also the Country Club Bridge project is under way, just a reminder it is closed. The project is anticipated for about four months. Just a reminder our website is [sjbparish.com](http://sjbparish.com) all of the most current things are listed there. You can also sign up for email alerts and we want to wish everyone a Happy Valentine's Day and a special valentine wish to someone in the audience."

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 8:23 PM, Councilwoman Millet moved and Councilwoman Usry seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

/s/Ronnie Smith  
COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

/s/Jackie Landeche  
Council Secretary