

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH COUNCIL
TUESDAY, JULY 12th, 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 Rudolph Soraparu Chambers, Edgard, Louisiana on Tuesday, July 12th, 2011, at 6:30 PM.

CALL TO ORDER:

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

ABSENT: None

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

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

Ronnie Smith/Raphael Neal – Presentation – Youth Planning Board

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

Consent Agenda

Items: Approval of Minutes June 28th, 2011, Regular Meeting; Permit Approval – Church Fair – St. John Catholic Church – Edgard – October 28th – 30th, 2011

MOTION: Councilman Lewis moved and Councilman Julien seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda items consisting of Approval of Minutes June 28th, 2011, Regular Meeting; Permit Approval – Church Fair – St. John Catholic Church – Edgard – October 28th – 30th, 2011. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING ON ORDINANCES:

11-18 (Carried Over 05/24/11) an ordinance to provide for sale of adjudicated properties. (N. Robottom)

The administration requests a carry over of this item.

11-25 (Public Hearing Held) An ordinance amending St. John the Baptist Parish Code of Ordinances, Section 111-57, as follows: Administrative re-subdivision of land (N. Robottom)

Natalie Robottom stated, *"This ordinance is a change that will have the parish's ordinance in compliance with the state rules and regulations."*

MOTION: Councilwoman Hotard moved and Councilwoman Usry seconded the motion to approve Ordinance 11-25. The motion passed with 8 yeas and 1 abstaining (Cheryl Millet).

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES:

11-26 An ordinance introducing the annual operating budget for the St. John Parish Health and Human Services Department for the Fiscal year beginning January 1, 2011 and ending December 31, 2011. (N. Robottom)

11-27 Be it ordained, by the St. John the Baptist Parish Council in a public meeting held on _____, which meeting was conducted in accordance with the open meetings law and additional requirements of Article VII, Section 23(C) of the Louisiana Constitution and R.S. 47:1705 (B), that the taxing authority adopt the millage rates, on all taxable property shown on the official assessment roll for the year 2011 and when collected, the revenues from said taxes shall be used only for the specific purposes for which said taxes have been levied. (N. Robottom)

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Councilman Lee stated, *"The finance committee met at 6:15 this evening. We had approximately seven items of business to conduct on behalf of the parish. I would ask at this time for a motion from one of my fellow council members and a second to approve the actions taken at the finance committee meeting."*

MOTION: Councilwoman Millet moved and Councilwoman Usry seconded the motion to accept the recommendation of the finance committee. The committee approved to grant administration authorization to award the contract for Solid Waste Collection & Removal to IESI/SWDI, approved to grant administration authorization to extend the lease agreement for an additional 60 days with Roxann W. Gort at 975 Cambridge Blvd. for temporary use by the Health & Human Services Department during renovation of their office in Reserve, approved grant administration authorization to enter into a Joint-Use Agreement with the State of Louisiana Dept of Transportation & Development for use of the land and airspace at the intersection of LA 18 & LA 3212 as a Farmer's Market, approved to grant administration authorization to renew Airport Public Officials and employee's liability insurance policy, approved to grant administration authorization to renew St. John Theatre general liability insurance policy, and approved to grant administration authorization to renew the service agreement with Motorola Solutions, Inc. for the 911 system operating equipment in the amount of \$73,921.56. The motion passed with 8 yeas and 1 abstaining (Lee).

DEPARTMENT/ENGINEER REPORTS:

Charles Julien/Davillier Law Group – (Carry Over 06-14-11) Enter into contract for small business, local business/diversity program

Councilman Julien stated, *"I have Mr. Davillier here and he will come today and present some information that I think is pertinent and that I*

think is important for the parish to hear as well as the council members."

Daniel Davillier, Attorney Davillier Law Group, stated, "I have been asked to come and share some insight into DBE programs which are programs that other cities and parishes currently have in our state to encourage the utilization of local, small and disadvantaged businesses in connection with the performance of various parish contracts whether it is a construction contract or a contract for the procurement of goods and services. Typically the way that works and what I guess this council will be considering if you decide to move forward with an ordinance is in the case of New Orleans for example we have an ordinance there that says there is a goal that any contracts by the city utilize at least 50% of local companies and 35% DBE companies. Which again those are disadvantaged business enterprises to be distinguished from other terms used in that space sometimes minority business enterprises or women business enterprises. A DBE designation is race and gender neutral which means that all small businesses are eligible to obtain that certification. The primary emphasis for the program and why other cities and parishes have adopted them is to ensure that your local small and disadvantaged businesses have a full and fair opportunity to participate on parish contracts whether that is construction or procurement of goods and services. Also with respect to the Orleans Parish ordinance there is the component that requires 50% local and that is without regard to size. So even larger local companies there is a goal stated that you want to use your local larger companies and that ties into also an economic development benefit in that when there is work to be done in the parish to the extent that you have local companies that are capable of performing that who employ local citizens and residents that pay taxes locally it is a way to ensure that your local companies are included in the business that the parish is doing and that you maximize the economic benefits from an economic development stand point of having those dollars circulating in your community more than once. I am not sure how detailed you want to get into it. If the council decides to go forward with an ordinance obviously there would be a lot more discussion about the implications of the ordinance but there is a second component that is much more detailed. In other words the first step in adopting a DBE program is for the governing authority of the parish is to decide this is something that we would like to do and then there is another component of administering and setting up a program that is what are the requirements for certification? Are you going to have your own certification as a DBE or disadvantaged business enterprise or are you going to allow the state Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development that has a DBE certification through what is called a Louisiana unified certification program. Companies certified there could count under your program. Also companies will need to understand the rules with respect to monitoring and enforcement of any such ordinance. If you pass an ordinance that is not effective then people don't have any incentive to comply and if there is no monitoring or enforcement of that ordinance and that is an issue that other parishes and cities are dealing with now. So there is a second phase to an effort if the parish were to elect to move forward with an ordinance and without getting us bogged down in the details of a potential DBE program I wanted to provide a brief overview. I am happy to answer any questions that anyone has at this time."

Councilman Lee stated, "First of all I want to thank you for coming. Mr. Julien has had this on the agenda for a number of weeks. We have had extensive discussion over the year about DBE, minority programs and different ways to help the local community get more involved. Obviously your firm are experts when it comes to this so I appreciate you being here tonight. I had a brief conversation with Mr. Julien. I think that we have some laws on the books which clearly fall under a partial definition of a DBE but we never have met the muster. So as I mentioned to Mr. Julien or actually he mentioned to me he said he thought perhaps we could form a committee to try to clean that up and move in that direction that might be the way to go because we have been beating a dead dog to death on it trying to accomplish some things and we just really haven't. Like I said we have some laws on the books but they just don't meet the muster. Our attorneys have told us that. I think this is a step in the right direction. I hope Mr. Julien is prepared to make such a motion that we study it in that fashion because if we put something on the books that requires some action by this council I would want it to be something that is meaningful and something that can be administered and overseen properly by this council and this administration. So thank you very much."

Councilman Julien stated, "At this point we have spoken extensively as he said. We do have laws that do not give our small businesses what they need and at this point I am asking my fellow council members to join with me and we will put together a committee so that we will be able to tap into the resources. Then maybe have you, I am not sure if you write the ordinance or in what capacity we need your expertise but we certainly do need your expertise. So that is where we are at. I would like that administration get the information so we would be able to move forward as we have with the contract with Ms. Eugene. I think that the two could work together which would create a situation where we would be able to get some work done for our locals."

Natalie Robottom stated, "Mr. Julien I am in receipt and I am not sure if everyone else is of the original proposal. I agree with Mr. Lee that at this point a meeting would be in order for us to discuss more in a different setting what the options might be and then we will go from there. I think that is a good first thought. I had the opportunity to read over the information first. I don't know that everybody has but just in listening to the presentation it was somewhat different from what our original conversation went towards but I do think it would be appropriate first to call a meeting and have a committee and sit down and discuss what is possible and make some decisions on where we want this to go as far as the next step. If you establish a committee we will be happy to set that up in our office."

Councilman Julien asked, "The information that I forwarded to you, did you have an opportunity to pass it on or could we get that information forwarded?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "I do have it. I can get you copies of that."

Councilman Smith stated, "My thing is Mr. Julien I would like to thank you for bringing Mr. Davillier in because of his expertise in this field. I think it is very important that we find a way to help our small businesses in our community. Not only small businesses but as you stated earlier even the larger ones. One of the important things is to

keep our tax dollars at home. I am not exactly sure, I know your expertise is helping to set this program up and I think our original goal, Mr. Julien's original goal, was to bring you in to help set this program up here in St. John Parish. I am in 100% agreement with Mr. Julien that we do need to form a committee with the council and administration so that we can sit down and possibly bring your firm in so that we can have an oversight exactly on what we need to do and use your expertise to set this up so that we can move this forward. We really I think need to move this forward ASAP so that we can get the small businesses in our community working. Thank you Mr. Davillier for coming by."

Daniel Davillier stated, "Thank you and we look forward to working with you if you guys decide to move forward."

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS:

There was no new business.

CORRESPONDANCE/COUNCIL BRIEFS

Councilman Lewis stated, "I have two projects but really they are dealing with DOTD. On 3427 from 640 to the bridge that road is so bad you have to watch because it throws you into another car that's how bad it is back there. I am asking administration to get to the state and ask them to do something with the highway back there. On Hwy 18, here in the Edgard area, between W. 4th and W. 3rd they have some wire that has been hanging from an accident about two and a half months. It looks like the telephone company isn't going to do something until someone gets hurt then they are going to finally do something. I would like to write them or get them over here so they can get that straight."

Councilman Gauff stated, "I would like to thank Pastor Neil, New Wine, the gentlemen of the Christian Fellowship and our Parish President and her administration and benefactors that helped to get the basketball court installed and back up and running in the LaPlace housing facility. Those kids and the residents really appreciate that. This is one of many projects that we would like to implement to get these kids off of the street and help the kids actually to stay healthy also to give them some exercise. So I thank you very much."

Councilman Smith stated, "Mrs. Robottom I do have a concern. I received a text or an email in reference to the situation at the animal shelter. Could you give us an update on that air condition situation at the old shelter?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "We kind of hoped that would slip by but I am glad you brought it up so we could clear it up for everybody at one time. We were aware that there was an air conditioning problem at the older portion of the animal shelter. The public works department had been out there as well as the air conditioning vendor. A purchase order and requisition was signed. It should be in this week and will be changed out I think tomorrow. It is a combination project on the new

shelter as well as the older one but that system is being changed out. However I do need to clarify the animals were never in danger. Kathy Gilmore worked very closely with the shelter employees in developing contingencies and installing plans and making suggestions as to moving the animals to the shelter where it did work, possibly boarding them with rescue groups or even with vets. None of that was accepted or decided was needed by the workers or the employees at the animal shelter so it was never implemented. However Kathy has been in constant contact with them. I think some of the emails; texts and facebook messages that went out were erroneous. They were unqualified and they really tended to provide misinformation. So we will deal with that situation on our end. However the air conditioning situation is being handled and the new unit has been approved for purchase and installation this week."

Councilman Smith stated, "Thank you Mrs. Robottom. I had been in contact with Ms. Gilmore. She kept me updated with everything that I needed to know. I actually just asked that question so that you could clear that up for the public on exactly what was being done."

Natalie Robottom stated, "We are going to ask that if you get those calls or questions that you share the correct information as well. We have attempted to respond to all the emails and email chains that were sent out to rescue groups around the country with respect to the air conditioning situation at our shelter. Clarification has been sent out and we will deal with the problem."

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Natalie Robottom stated, "I want to thank everybody who helped with our annual veteran's luncheon and the fireworks display along the river on both sides of the river. I think it was the largest event and it was very positive. I am continuing to receive calls and emails regarding that event. Just to let you know that is not something that we can do alone. It is a team effort. It is lots of us working together and we are going to continue to make it bigger and better each year. I do want to let everyone know, I think there is an article in the paper, but Lt. Governor Jay Darden, who is responsible for tourism all around the state was actually in the River Parishes. He stopped in St. John and visited the community center and the film production company because the tax credits that were generated and initiated by his office or him are what lure the movie production companies to the state of Louisiana. He was very impressed with our site as well as the producer was there to explain why it is that they come to Louisiana. They also took advantage of tours to I think a swamp tour and the plantations along the river and we are hopeful that he will use our area as a marketing tool or to market it around the state as a place for people to visit. He was very pleased with it. We want to thank the tourist commission for organizing it and we look forward to him visiting us again. Administration held a meeting with faith based organizations. It is my understanding that a couple of years ago with regards to hurricane preparedness there was a group pulled together but hadn't really moved forward from that point on. Our first meeting was a great success. What we are doing is developing a system for response from our faith based organizations. We all know government will not and has not ever been able to do everything following an emergency. We rely very heavily on that committee to help us in feeding our residents, to help with

sheltering, to help deliver and distribute goods that are needed however it is usually on the back end. We are encouraging them to be involved in the planning process on the front end so we know what every organization has available to provide and we have a systematic way of distributing that to our residents. They are very receptive. We are actually going to have another meeting on August 4th, Thursday at 3:00 in the Council Chambers. I think we had about 20 churches represented. Some couldn't come they have elected two members to represent them during an emergency and they will be responsible for getting information out to other faith based organizations during a storm. The St. John Theatre is presenting Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, an adult comedy that will keep audiences laughing, humming and guessing at the end. The performances are July 22nd through the 24th and the 27th through the 30th. Advanced tickets are available to purchase at Allied Express in LaPlace. Some positive information, we struggled with the Mississippi River and the flooding for some time now. The river is below the 11 foot stage at the Carrollton gauge and the restrictions have been lifted. So I think we had about 6, 7 if not 8 projects that were stalled because of the restrictions of digging within 1,500 feet of the levee. Those are all ready to go and should be activated in the near future. We were very fortunate I think we dodged a bullet with the flooding but I think we stayed on top of it and unfortunately it delayed some of our projects but we are ready to get started. Just a reminder again regarding the political signs, that time is approaching July 25th, all signs are able to be put out but until then we are asking you to monitor your campaigns and I actually did, after our conversation, speak with the governor's office and let them know as they were not aware that we had an ordinance in our parish and Mike's office is going to be working with some of the ones that have signs out. I do want to thank Mr. Gauff. He headed the project along with Pastor Bernard for the Housing Authority and it wasn't just myself, Sheriff Wayne Jones assisted, DA Tom Daley because what we are attempting to do is to provide some activity for the youth within the Housing Authority to keep them busy with something of value, some healthy activity. We are going to continue to do things outreach into that community and of course if anyone else is interested in helping we will be glad to move it into some of the other housing units. This one was for the LaPlace unit and again it took a group effort to get this done. It took some volunteerism, financial support and labor. Each of us had different things to give."

There was no executive session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

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

Cable Franchise Agreement

Any and all pending legal matters

ADJOURNMENT:

At 6:56 PM, Councilwoman Usry moved and Councilwoman Millet seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

/s/Ronnie Smith
COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

/s/Jackie Landeche
Council Secretary