

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH COUNCIL
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2008
CHAIR JACLYN HOTARD
VICE CHAIR RONNIE SMITH
(Meeting was rescheduled from September 9th
due to Hurricane Gustave)

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 Thursday, September 11, 2008, at 6:30 PM.

CALL TO ORDER:

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL: Charles Julien, Councilman District III, Darnel Usry, Councilwoman District V, Cheryl Millet, Councilwoman District VII, Steve Lee, Councilman-at-Large, Div. B, Ronnie Smith, Councilman District VI, Danny Millet, Councilman District II, Dale Wolfe, Councilman-at-Large, Div. A

ABSENT: Jaclyn Hotard & Haston Lewis

Councilman Millet led the Prayer. Councilwoman Millet led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Bill Hubbard, Parish President, was present.

Legal Counsels Barry Landry and Kerry Brown were present.

Consent Agenda

Items: Approval of Minutes August 26, 2008, Regular Meeting.

MOTION: Councilwoman Millet moved and Councilman Lee seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda consisting of Approval of Minutes August 26, 2008, Regular Meeting. The motion passed with Councilman Lewis and Councilwoman Hotard absent.

PUBLIC HEARING ON ORDINANCES:

08-48 (Public Hearing Held)An ordinance for conditional approval of DV & D RV Park (formerly CNO) located on the Celestin Jacob Tract, Lot 1-30, Section 41 & 89, T-11-S, R-7-E, Reserve, St. John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana.(David Scioneaux - PZS-08-009) (B. Hubbard)

Mike Henderson, Planning & Zoning, stated, "*The applicant is requesting preliminary approval for a private trailer court. It has been to the planning commission and the utility board and they all have approved that. A variance was granted by the ZBA for a 24 foot limestone roadway. It has an existing 12 foot asphalt side road. The administration does recommend approval.*"

MOTION: Councilman Millet moved and Councilman Julien seconded the motion

to approve Ordinance 08-48. The motion passed with Councilwoman Hotard and Councilman Lewis absent.

08-49 (Public Hearing Held) An ordinance for a Family re-subdivision of Lot C-2-A formerly being a portion of Lots 12, 13, 14, & 15 of Hope Plantation Subdivision into lots herein designated as Lots C-2-A-1, C-2-A-2, C-2-A-3, C-2-A-4, C-2-A-5 of Hope Plantation Subdivision, Garyville St. John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana. (Richard Maus PZR-08-015)
(B. Hubbard)

Mike Henderson stated, "This is a request for a family owned re-sub. The applicant understands that the property is to be exclusively for use by the immediate family members and that no parish services will be provided to the residents of the newly created lots. The administration has no objection."

Councilwoman Hotard arrived to the council meeting at 6:40 PM.

MOTION: Councilman Julien moved and Councilman Millet seconded the motion to approve Ordinance 08-49. The motion passed with 7 yeas, 1 absent (Lewis) and 1 abstaining (Hotard).

08-50 (Public Hearing Held) An ordinance to provide a three percent (3%) increase for all hourly employees of the St. John the Baptist Parish Council. (D. Wolfe)

Councilman Lee asked, "I would like to get some financial data. You might notice in our administrative report unlike most items this came to us with no recommendation but never the less I feel like I need to ask several questions of the administration. So at this time I would ask that the administration indulge me and give me some data so that I may make a financial decision on this request. Basically I am open for some data but specifically in 2008, what have we done on behalf of our employee percentages thus far?"

Pat McTopy, Chief Administrative Officer, stated, "Towards the beginning of the year the parish gave a 2% and 3% for a total of 5% and as a result of the wage study that was performed this past spring. The council recently approved a 2% raise for a total of 7%."

Councilman Lee asked, "And approximately what did we give last year"

Pat McTopy stated, "2007 the employees received a 5% raise. In 2006 they received a 6% raise."

Councilman Lee stated, "So in the last three years they received a 6%, a 5% and a 7% thus far. I appreciate it thank you very much."

Councilman Wolfe stated, "I don't know what the justification is for the questioning but according to the study and I haven't seen the study, I heard about it. The common sense study is that our employees are grossly under paid. Whether they got a 6% increase, 7% increase, 9% increase they are still grossly under paid. Just under this item Ordinance 08-51, administration is asking for a grade 11. I want to find out what questions are we going to ask about grade 11? That is for special employees. Now if we can approve a grade 11, surely we can approve a 3% increase. Hopefully our employees will be granted a 3% increase. Again

they are grossly under paid. I would hope and pray that this 3% increase passes. I have heard rumors and all of that that we are going to make a deal for the grade 11 and pass the 3%. When we talk about making a deal I just think about the program on TV, Deal or No Deal. As far as I am concerned, I am going to slam the hammer and say no deal. If we treat all of our employees equally and fair I could understand that, but we will see the outcome of this. Ordinance 08-51 has been on the agenda, as I remember, this is the third time."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "I feel along with Mr. Lee that the raises that we have given the employees this year thus far has been very worth while. I would rather see than a percentage, an hourly raise. That way the employees would receive an upgrade in theirs because the higher salaries do get a higher percentage. The lower salaries get the lower percentage. I would rather see an hourly increase rather than a percentage increase."

Councilman Julien stated, "I do think that our employees are under paid. I am trying to keep an open mind about all of this stuff. When it comes back to the grade 11, as Dale said as a parish I think we have to keep open minds. We have to do things that are going to help the parish. Administration came with an idea. One that I didn't back before that in this instance I will back. I think that, as Mr. Wolfe is saying, our employees are under paid. We have to show them that they are appreciated and the cost of living is going up. Inflation is going up, so I think we have to take care of our employees. I am hoping that all the board members will keep an open mind and not make it a personal issue."

Councilman Smith stated, "My only two cents about this is I think I will vote for this raise for the employees because I do feel that our employees are deserving but I have to kind of favor to what Mrs. Millet said. In the future I just wish instead of giving them a percentage raise that they would get an across the board hourly raise. The reason for that is exactly what Mrs. Millet said with a percentage raise the higher paid personnel are getting more money in this raise than the personnel that make less money. That is the only negative if any that I have against this, but again Mr. Wolfe I will be supporting your ordinance."

Councilman Wolfe stated, "You know in support of that, when you talk about a 2% raise, you aren't talking about anything. When you talk about a 5% raise you aren't talking about much according to our employee's hourly pay. I really don't want to say anything ugly and maybe I will if it doesn't pass, but we need to look at what things that we have approved in the past for some of our employees. Now grade 11 what percentage is that and not knowing who we are talking about giving that increase to grade 11 big bucks, no whammy, big bucks. So I reserve my comments for the next ordinance."

MOTION: Councilman Wolfe moved and Councilman Julien seconded the motion to approve Ordinance 08-50. The motion passed with 7 yeas, 1 against (Lee) and 1 absent (Lewis).

Councilman Wolfe stated, "I would like to thank the council. I appreciate it."

08-51 (Public Hearing Held) An ordinance enacting the following changes to the pay plan as per the recommendation of the Civil Service Board on

March 26, 2008: - Create Grade 11 for Professional/Administrator classification - Create Title of "Professional Administrator" Position in Grade 11 (B. Hubbard)

Councilwoman Millet stated, "This ordinance came before us once before and I couldn't support it then because the raises that we have given the employees in addition to the grade stepping that we have taken care of. I don't think it is fair to put someone in this position for the next administration to absorb it because now they would be protected by civil service. That is what our directors are for and our administration has that opportunity to choose their directors. To as for a grade 11 to have the next administration absorb that I think that is unfair. I cannot support it, once again."

Bill Hubbard, Parish President, stated, "We put this back on the agenda once again because I really feel like there needs to be some continuity between this administration, this council that is sitting right now and the next administration coming in and the next council and the one after that and the one after that. If you remember back when I was first elected and probably when every Parish President is newly elected we are under a lot of pressure to basically clean house and get new people in. If a Parish President decides to do that than you are starting off basically with pretty much all rookies unless you find some good qualified people out there. This grade 11 will enable this parish to have engineers, professional people, coastal management, different positions. It is not about any certain people. This is just a grade. We stop at grade 10. If we go to grade 11 and we create professional positions then our parish can move into the future a little more comfortably. That is all this is about. We have no special people picked out for any certain jobs and I know Mr. Wolfe if there were any deal makings going on, you made some pretty good deals on that 3% raise that you just passed. Congratulations on that. You can talk to each and everyone of these council members none of them received a call from me on this item right here. If you think it is a good idea for the parish, as I do, than I would appreciate your support. If you think it is a bad idea that is okay, we will continue on doing the best that we can do. Thank you."

Councilman Julien stated, "Initially when the ordinance was introduced I was against it. Not going against any one individual, but as a board we have to be able to agree and disagree and still work together. The administration asked for the grade 11. I didn't vote for it the first time. I think that as a council we should support it. I think we should support it because we have to keep an open mind when trying to propel this new administration and helping them to move forward. So I think we do have an obligation to our constituents as well as we do to our administration to try to do the best we can to try to make it as successful as we can."

Councilman Lee stated, "I thought it was good when it was delivered a number of months ago. Parish President Hubbard didn't invent this. It has been brought to councils before to provide a mid level of management with professionals in certain areas. I thought it was a good idea then. I think it is a good idea now. Obviously I made the motion I will support it."

Councilman Wolfe stated, "I made a statement two times before, I don't need to rehash that and I am ready to vote."

MOTION: Councilman Lee moved and Councilwoman Usry seconded the motion to approve Ordinance 08-51. The motion passed with 6 yeas, 2 against (Wolfe & Cheryl Millet) and 1 absent (Lewis).

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES:

08-52 An ordinance to consider and take action with respect to introducing an ordinance providing for the issuance and sale of \$4,560,000 of General Obligation Refunding Bonds, Series 2008, of the Parish of St. John the Baptist, State of Louisiana; and providing for other matters in connection therewith. (B. Hubbard)

08-53 An ordinance to provide that all parish employees, who have been employed by the Parish for ten (10) years or more, shall not be required to make any additional contributions regarding health benefits available to the employees and their families, beyond that which is presently in effect, such that those employees who have ten (10) years or more employment with the Parish shall be allowed to have health insurance coverage for the employee and their families as per the present status quo as it pertains to the premiums presently fully paid by the Parish. This provision only applies to the premium and not to any required co-pays or deductibles as applicable. (C. Julien)

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

There were no committee meetings.

DEPARTMENT/ENGINEER REPORTS:

Ralph Bean, Director of Utilities, stated, "During this last hurricane I would like to publicly thank the employees, the men and women of the utilities department who did an excellent job of keeping the utilities, the water and the waste water maintaining the system through the storm. There were some minor disruptions, but they were addressed quickly. Through this storm and through Katrina they maintained the water and the sewer as best as humanly possible through adverse conditions. I want to say that they did an excellent job. The managers that oversaw those are pretty tired right now. They deserve your thanks when you see them. I am sure that the public will thank them when they see them out in the streets."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "I was around for this storm and I understand that the employees did a phenomenal job. Mr. Hubbard, his entire administration, you all hung in there and took care of it. I just don't want to see the fuel bill when it comes in. My question has to do with the NANO filtration system that was due to go on."

Ralph Bean stated, "I think Mr. Savoie is going to address that."

Julia Remondet, Director of EDC, stated, "I just wanted to let everyone

know that the SBA is ready to assist businesses from Hurricane Gustav. There will be loans available for businesses of any size up to two million dollars to repair or replace damages and also help with replacing machinery and equipment and inventory. This is listed on our website. We also have a phone number 1-800-621-3362 on that. I also wanted to let everyone know that again we have been put in a position to have to post pone our andouille festival pageant till October 11th. This will be at St. John Theatre Saturday, October 11th at 7:00 PM and our baby contest will be on October 19th at the Community Center with the festival."

Dale Wolfe - Personnel Matters

There were no personnel matters at this time.

Jaclyn Hotard/Ronnie Smith/Montgomery Watson/GE - Report on the NANO filtration project

Chuck Savoie, Parish Engineer, stated, "Hurricane Gustav kind of through a wrench in our gears for the start up date we had proposed for August 28th, which probably would have ended up being the 29th, but with the pending storm it was the decision of the administration, we chose not to start it up because if we had any possible problems from the storm in reference to pumping through the NANO filtration system, this was not the time to get involved with it. So I think that was a prudent decision not to do that at that time. Since that time Cade with General Electric who is the chief representative from GE who has been doing most of the work as far as getting the filter started, left town for Hurricane Gustav. Unfortunately he lives around Houston and he is over there now with the effects of Ike heading towards him, so we don't know when he is going to return. We did get a successful bac T test, so the bacteria test has passed and we are ready as far as being in that position. We don't suspect any damages as a result of Gustav. The electronics have not been turned on yet, but we don't suspect that there is any damage to the system from the storm. Lastly right now the wells at Ruddock Station #1, where your two wells are located are on generator right now. We also don't want to start up while we have those on generators. So as far as giving you a start up date, I can't right now till after Ike passes and we find out when GE will return so that we can start up the system."

Councilwoman Millet asked, "Will you let me know that information as soon as it is available to you?"

Chuck Savoie stated, "Yes, I will."

Charles Julien - Complete/Incomplete work orders in District III

Councilman Julien stated, "I don't have anything at this time."

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS:

Pat McTopy - Authorization to advertise for renovations to the juvenile

service facility on River Road in Reserve

Pat McTopy stated, "For the benefit of the public this is the old utilities office in Reserve on the River Road. It is in need of repairs. The parking lot has numerous pot holes. The fencing around the perimeter needs to be installed. The building is antiquated. It needs to be brought up to current standards as well as ADA standards and we would like authorization to advertise for renovations to that facility."

MOTION: Councilwoman Millet moved and Councilman Millet seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to advertise for renovations to the juvenile service facility on River Road in Reserve. The motion passed with Councilman Lewis and Councilwoman Hotard absent.

Pat McTopy - Authorization to advertise for canal and ditch digging and cleaning

Pat McTopy stated, "By bidding this item out for certain ditch digging and cleaning, we would have a contractor at our disposal as we needed him. We would know that he would be reliable from working with us. We would know that he would have the proper insurance, because we have a very rigid insurance program that we enforce. We would essentially have someone at our call to do work as needed to our canals and ditches."

Councilman Millet asked, "On the canals that you are digging, is that going to be Reserve Canal and also Hope Canal with that?"

Pat McTopy stated, "I don't know that there are specific plans to have that contractor to dig them, but as you know Paul Oncale had toured both of those canals with the Coast Guard and FEMA representatives before the hurricane with the goal of getting funds from those agencies to clean those two canals."

Councilman Wolfe asked, "What contract are we talking about?"

Pat McTopy stated, "It would be a contract with an hourly rate for specific pieces of equipment with manpower and he would bill us based on those hourly rates for work assigned."

Councilman Wolfe asked, "Do we have a set amount that we are going to spend on ditches and canals?"

Pat McTopy stated, "Well it would be subject to budget limitations within the public works department and if the council desired at any point if we needed to increase the budget we would have to come to the council to do that."

Councilman Wolfe asked, "So we don't have an idea as to how much this is going to cost?"

Pat McTopy stated, "Well the cost would be determined by the projects that we assign and would be subject to budget limitations."

Councilman Wolfe stated, "No I am saying we should have a limit that we are going to spend on that. I am trying to find out what is the limit. What is the max and who the contractor will be?"

Pat McTopy stated, "That is why we are going to bid it. To allow all interested contractors the opportunity to bid it in a clear and transparent manner."

Councilman Wolfe asked, "Bid it under professional service contract or just bid it out right?"

Pat McTopy stated, "I don't think it would qualify as a professional service contract. It would be an open public bid and the lowest bidder would get the contract."

Councilman Julien stated, "I am new with all the contracts and all that goes along with it, but basically my issue would be if we could try to create a situation where we could have a contract from St. John the Baptist Parish working as opposed to going out and getting people outside of the parish. I know it is a bid situation. Is there anything we can do Mr. McTopy to create a situation so that maybe some of the people of St. John might be able to get that contract?"

Pat McTopy stated, "Well we have local contractors that are capable of doing the work and if they do have some equipment and those that don't have equipment could rent equipment so what we can do is encourage them to bid. We can notify those that might be interested in bidding."

Councilman Julien stated, "As I am learning, is there anything that we can do to ensure that we keep the business here?"

Kerry Brown, Legal Counsel, stated, "All of the bids would be subject to the lowest bidder, whether it is a local contractor or an outside contractor. I would not advise the council to be concerned about that. I would have you to simply focus on the amount that you are going to spend and utilize the public bid law that would allow you to go for the lowest bidder, not a local or an outside contract."

Councilman Wolfe stated, "Pat the reason I was asking about the limit that we are going to spend on that is that I would like administration or to remind administration that we have a minority set aside and whichever contractor gets it, if it is not a minority then I hope that we will enforce our minority set aside."

Pat McTopy stated, "I will get with you on that and you can show me where that policy is and we can review it."

Councilman Wolfe stated, "Jackie can get that to you."

Councilman Smith stated, "Mr. McTopy we do have that policy in place and it is 25% set aside for minority contractors."

MOTION: Councilman Julien moved and Councilman Millet seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to advertise for canal and ditch digging and cleaning. The motion passed with Councilman Lewis and Councilwoman Hotard absent.

CORRESPONDENCE/COUNCIL BRIEFS

Councilwoman Millet stated, "Believe it or not, I want to commend Mr.

Hubbard and the administration for the handling of Hurricane Gustav. You did a fabulous job and I will be the first one to admit it. Thank you and keep up the good work."

Councilwoman Usry stated, "I agree with Mrs. Millet. It was an experience to view all of the employees and Mr. Oncale's efforts and Mr. Hubbard's and Mr. Buddy Boe's as well in communicating all of the things that had to be communicated to us and to our constituents. I also would like to send condolences to Mark Howard and his family. His mother passed away this morning. Mrs. Howard was a teacher in the parish. She touched the lives of many students and people. I would like to extend my sympathies to his family."

Councilman Julien stated, "I would like to remind my community about the community protest that will be going on in front of the St. John school board. The date has been changed to September 18th, 2008. I think at the last meeting I might have made a mistake and said 15% of African American voters, but it is 51%, I am sorry, I want the record to reflect that I did make a mistake. Remember to come in front of the St. John school board and even though I know it may not be the politically correct thing to do, sometimes people see things differently. Different cultures have different issues and different ways of seeing things. So sometimes I may say things that may offend my fellow council members and for that I want to apologize, but for the views and for supporting and doing what my community wants me to do and that is speak up on the issues that we have in our community. This is where we are at. So again I want to apologize to my council members but we will be going forward with the protest on September 18th."

Councilman Millet stated, "I would also like to commend the administration for what they did during the hurricane. Also Entergy, Mrs. Butler, she did a great job getting the power back on for us. I know she had a rough job and a lot of people gave her a hard time."

Councilman Wolfe stated, "I would like to thank administration and the staff that worked very hard in terms of helping the people of St. John the Baptist Parish. Bill I guess I will do a little spoiling by saying I would like to thank everyone except two of your staff and if it happens again I am going to give my grievance in public. I didn't appreciate some of the things that went on. I especially didn't appreciate someone saying that I was upset because no one wanted to give me money. I am not a money person. If I needed money I sure wouldn't ask that individual. I still have a hard time adjusting to those statements. I didn't appreciate it. I still don't appreciate it. I wish that gentleman would go find a job somewhere else because he surely is not qualified for that position. You have to want and love people to understand at a time like that. He is here tonight. So he hears exactly what I am saying not behind his back but in front of his face."

Councilman Smith stated, "My comments and kudos also go out to the administration and everyone that was involved in the past hurricane. All the directors that stayed and helped and did what they had to do. I would also like to thank our St. John the Baptist Parish school board because our school board stepped out and helped us when we couldn't get help in other places. So to them I do want to say thank you. I want to send special thanks out to Drago's who supplied food for our people in

times when we didn't have electricity to cook our own food. Piccadilly's also came down on a state bid and did the same thing. Other than that I am sure I missed someone out there so everybody you know who you are, that helped and participated thank you. A special thanks to the Air National Guard that ran the pot for us and gave out all those MRE's, ice and water. I would also like to thank Duck's Ice that helped us from the West Bank. We really needed him and he really stepped up to the plate. Last but not least, I want to advise the public that due to the winds that we are having right now from Ike, there is no school in St. John the Baptist Parish tomorrow. Thank you and everybody be safe over the weekend."

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Bill Hubbard stated, "Thanks for all the kind words. We really did work hard and I feel like we did a pretty good job during the hurricane. I am just thinking I don't have a list of people because I knew I would miss somebody, but the administration thanks, the council members that participated just thanks to everybody for helping us out. It was a big challenge and we did some things that were different from all the other hurricanes and it worked out pretty good. I wish we could have gotten our power on a little quicker. It could have made the people in our parish more comfortable, but we did the best we could and thanks to Entergy for getting our power on. My wife thanks you. I hear River Forest is out of power tonight. So I might be sleeping in my office again. I am glad I kept my air mattress in there. With all of that being said, it is regretful that I have to give you this news. I declared an emergency today for Hurricane Ike. You know it is out in the Gulf. We will feel the effects starting tonight at 10:00 PM. We are going to feel winds at 40+ miles per hour and that is going to last all night long and into tomorrow. We have a voluntary evacuation for anybody living in low lying areas and mobile homes, if you want to, if you feel like you need to, there is a voluntary evacuation in effect right now. All the schools in the parish will be closed tomorrow due to Hurricane Ike. We reinstated the curfew. It is from 12:00 midnight till 6:00 AM, beginning tonight. Food stamp registration will be closed tomorrow due to Hurricane Ike. It will re-opened Saturday, September 13th from 8:00 AM till 8:00 PM. It will remain open through September 17th. So tomorrow don't show up because it will be closed. Let's just hope that Entergy did a good job with our power lines tonight because I am expecting some outages. If you go without electricity, let us remember our sewer system just refrain from using your water, taking long showers, don't wash clothes, hopefully we will keep the water running. We have generators in place, we are putting some pumps back in place in key areas. That is pretty much all I have tonight. I am tired. Thanks to everyone for helping out."

There was no executive session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Employee Back Pay

Dale Wolfe - Personnel Matters

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 Negotiations

Any and all pending legal matters.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:15 PM, Councilman Lee moved and Councilman Wolfe seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion passed with Councilman Lewis absent.

/s/Ronnie Smith
COUNCIL VICE-CHAIR

/s/Jackie Landeche
Council Secretary