

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
March 10, 2009
Chairman Steve Lee
Vice-Chairman Charles Julien

Members: Haston Lewis, Danny Millet, Charles Julien, Jaclyn Hotard, Darnel Usry, Ronnie Smith, Cheryl Millet, Dale Wolfe, Steve Lee

PRESENT: Danny Millet, Cheryl Millet, Darnel Usry, Steve Lee, Haston Lewis, Ronnie Smith, Dale Wolfe

ABSENT: Jaclyn Hotard and Charles Julien

BID OPENING REPORT/AWARDS:

Bid Openings

There were no bids.

Pat McTopy - Authorization to renew four code enforcement contracts and the Intergovernmental agreements with the Sheriff's Office pertaining to the officers

Pat McTopy, Chief Administrative Officer, stated, "As you recall over the years we have had contracts with the code enforcement officers to provide services and we have had an intergovernmental agreement between the parish and the sheriff's office whereby he would commission the officers. They are essentially all up for renewal now and we have one of the officers here tonight that would like to give a brief presentation on their duties, functions and etc."

Debbie Labit Stricks, St. John Code Enforcement Officer, stated, "The Code Enforcement Officers presently they have all been there for approximately one year. We strive to promote and maintain safe and desirable living and working environment. There are many studies across the United States that show that clearly when code enforcement is actively enforced that violent crime goes down and property rates go up. We also facilitate voluntary compliance rather than full enforcement. Of course for those who do not want to comply voluntarily we sometimes do have to get court orders or write citations. There are various examples that we have recently been involved with where within a couple of hours there were eight 2x2 signs placed advertising cash, guns and girls. Those were taken down within two hours. We have been removing illegal signs and notifying the owners of the ordinance, which many of them are not aware of the ordinance. We have been searching for missing street signs to put those up. There are many outdated and some of the businesses have no occupational licenses. That has been tended to. Illegal businesses in residential areas - We had one in particular that had a diesel spill from a large diesel tank that was stored in a home garage. That has been taken care of. Of course there were many derelict houses that were being used as crack houses. Those have been boarded and secured. From May 1, 2008 to March 10, 2009 abandoned vehicles - 284 files were completed and 74 open files are current. Grass and debris - 444 were completed, 60 open. Hazardous buildings - 52 completed and 51 open files. Junk - 9 completed and 4 open files for a total of 939 completed and 238 open files. Please keep in mind that an open file such as the junk, we recently had one we tagged 29

vehicles that is considered 1 file. Sometimes the numbers don't show it all but we are working and we are still out there and we are very happy to do our job."

Councilman Lee stated, "Also I would like to mention to my fellow council members that we have a written report that goes into a little more detail that was done by the code enforcement officers, that being Mrs. Labit-Stricks and others."

Councilman Wolfe asked, "You know the code enforcement is doing a really good job, but we really need the officers full time. She gave you some numbers that were accomplished and they are only part time. Just think how many numbers we would have if they were full time. So I would ask that administration at our next council meeting, bring us a report and findings in terms of full time employment for those officers and the cost that we would incur in doing so."

Councilman Smith stated, "I want to commend the officers for the great job that they are doing. I pick up the phone and call them for anything and it is jumped on immediately. So thank you. I have to agree with Mr. Wolfe. If these people would be full time it would benefit the parish a lot more."

MOTION: Councilman Lewis moved and Councilwoman Usry seconded the motion to give administration authorization to renew four code enforcement contracts and the Intergovernmental agreements with the Sheriff's Office pertaining to the officers. The motion passed with Councilwoman Hotard and Councilman Julien absent.

Councilman Julien arrived at 6:20 PM

Pat McTopy - Authorization to advertise for the lease of excess property at the West Bank Recreation Park for agricultural purposes

Pat McTopy stated, "It has been brought to our attention that one of the local farmers is interested in leasing some of the surplus property by the West Bank Recreation Complex. I understand the property now is not being used. The parish is going to have to cut it and maintain it. If we lease it the farmer will do that. The farmer can generate an income, put the property back in commerce and the parish should get a fraction of the crop. So we would like to have authorization to advertise in the official journal to do that. We would like to put a term. I understand there may be some concern about a long term lease. I assure the council it will not be a long term lease that would tie the property up indefinitely."

Councilman Lewis stated, "I would like to see year by year, even before we lease it out. I would like to see exactly how much land we are going to let them have and how much we are going to keep. I don't think we came up with a figure yet on how much we are going to lease out."

Pat McTopy stated, "I was just given the information this evening concerning the survey and the legal description of the property. So at this point I do not know how many acres are involved."

Councilman Lewis stated, "So before we lease anything I would like to make sure that whatever we are going to use, we have that in place."

Pat McTopy stated, "For the benefit of the new council members, we have a similar arrangement with one of the cane farmers on the East Bank for property over by the Reserve Drainage District by the Airport."

Councilman Wolfe stated, "This is the first I am hearing of this. I would like to post-poner this until our next meeting so I can get some information and make a wise and truthful decision. When we are talking about recreation, I want to make sure that our kids and adults have the necessary facilities and acreage to enjoy themselves."

MOTION: Councilman Wolfe moved and Councilman Lewis seconded the motion to table administration's authorization to advertise for the lease of excess property at the West Bank recreation park for agricultural purposes. The motion passed with Councilwoman Hotard absent.

Pat McTopy - Authorization to execute task order # 2009-1 with Meyer Engineers for design and supplemental services in connection with the Mississippi River Trail - Phase I

Pat McTopy stated, "This item goes hand and hand with the resolution we passed at the last meeting authorizing us to sign a grant application with the DOTD. As you recall we presented that at the last meeting. At that time I didn't have this task order. I would like to have presented both of them at the same time. This would provide for the design and supplemental services to design the project to take it to the next step. We have copies of the task order in your agenda books starting on page 12. We have Mr. David Dupre representing Meyer Engineers here tonight if you have any questions."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "I kind of just briefly reviewed this just a few minutes ago to see what it was. Has this been by our parish engineer as well?"

Pat McTopy stated, "Yes it has, that is correct."

Councilwoman Millet asked, "And the funding will come from?"

Pat McTopy stated, "It will be funded through the parish."

MOTION: Councilman Wolfe moved and Councilman Julien seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to execute task order # 2009-1 with Meyer Engineers for design and supplemental services in connection with the Mississippi River Trail - Phase I. The motion passed with Councilwoman Hotard absent.

Any and all other financial concerns

Councilman Lee stated, "This was an item given to me minutes ago. There should be a copy in front of you. I would like to read the resolution first, than I will yield the floor to CAO Pat McTopy to give us a brief explanation then hopefully we will get a motion on it. Resolution 09-02 **WHEREAS**, under the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) The Louisiana Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) expects to receive approximately \$43 million for

the improvement of wastewater infrastructure and other water quality improvement projects, and; **WHEREAS**, St. John the Baptist Parish is desirous of submitting a grant application or applications, and; **WHEREAS**, in order to submit the pre-application the governing body must adopt a resolution authorizing the Parish President to submit same; **NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the St. John the Baptist Parish Council acting as the governing authority for St. John the Baptist Parish hereby authorizes Parish President, Bill Hubbard, to submit a pre-applications and other information that may be required for Clean Water State Revolving Funds for the following projects: 1. Various Lift stations expansion and repairs 2. Inflow and infiltration rehabilitation 3. Upgrades to the parish waste water treatment facilities. If I might I would like to turn this over to Pat McTopy for a brief explanation."

Pat McTopy stated, "Council members I apologize for not having this on the formal agenda. This grant application was recently brought to our attention. There is a March 13th deadline in which to apply. So I felt it prudent that we ask you all to suspend the rules and bring it up. Again it will allow us to apply for sewer improvements."

Councilman Wolfe asked, "I want to be clear on the motion. We are only approving this to have the Parish President apply for grants? No contracts with anyone?"

Councilman Lee stated, "Yes sir for him to apply for grants and no contracts with anyone. The resolution is just as read."

Councilman Julien asked, "When would the funds be coming if we get them?"

Pat McTopy stated, "I cannot answer that specifically, but I can tell you that the deadline for applying is March 13th and I would expect they are going to be reviewing them sometimes later this year to make a determination."

Councilman Lee stated, "For some of the newer council members, sometimes these things happen. These monies become available at the Federal or State level and often times, not recently, but in past years Mr. Wolfe and Mr. Lewis and I have had these times where it is necessary to bring a resolution up because it certainly favored the council and the governing body, the opportunity to get funds from the state and feds. So whereas we would like to have this on the agenda in advance and have time where everybody can read the resolution. Sometimes the time element works against us and when it is something that benefits us and there is no down side to it the chair and the council will often times move forward on such an item."

Councilman Wolfe asked, "Who is going to be applying for the grant?"

Pat McTopy stated, "URS will be."

Councilman Wolfe asked, "What is it going to cost the parish? The administrative part of it?"

Pat McTopy stated, "We haven't made any contractual arrangements Mr. Wolfe."

Councilman Wolfe stated, "Before you do, I ask that you notify this council please."

MOTION: Councilman Smith moved and Councilwoman Usry seconded the motion to accept Resolution R09-02 **WHEREAS**, under the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) The Louisiana Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) expects to receive approximately \$43 million for the improvement of wastewater infrastructure and other water quality improvement projects, and; **WHEREAS**, St. John the Baptist Parish is desirous of submitting a grant application or applications, and; **WHEREAS**, in order to submit the pre-application the governing body must adopt a resolution authorizing the Parish President to submit same; **NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the St. John the Baptist Parish Council acting as the governing authority for St. John the Baptist Parish hereby authorizes Parish President, Bill Hubbard, to submit a pre-applications and other information that may be required for Clean Water State Revolving Funds for the following projects: 1. Various Lift stations expansion and repairs 2. Inflow and infiltration rehabilitation 3. Upgrades to the parish waste water treatment facilities. The motion passed with Councilwoman Hotard absent.

Adjournment

MOTION: Councilwoman Millet moved and Councilwoman Usry seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion passed with Councilwoman Hotard absent.