

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS**  
**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING**  
**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH COUNCIL**  
**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2008**  
**CHAIR JACLYN HOTARD**  
**VICE CHAIR RONNIE SMITH**

The Council of the Parish of St. John the Baptist, State of Louisiana, met in Special Session in the Joel S. McTopy Chambers, Percy D. Hebert Building, LaPlace, on Thursday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008, at 6:00 PM.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

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

**ABSENT:** Councilman Dale Wolfe

Legal Counsel Jeff Perilloux was present.

Councilman Smith led the Prayer. Councilwoman Usry led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Pat McTopy - Authorization to execute contracts for emergency repairs to Parish infrastructure damaged as a result of the recent hurricane.**

Pat McTopy, Chief Administrative Officer, stated, "Thank you for coming tonight on such short notice. We are here to address three specific issues that are very significant and important to the health and safety of the parish residents. It concerns the conditions of the parish's drainage systems, the culverts and the catch basins. That is one issue. The second issue would be the condition of the parish lift stations and sewer gravity lines. The third issue would be ditches and canals that have been contaminated, if you will, with debris, plastics and more specifically trees that have fallen in and are affecting our drainage. We have three issues and we are trying to be proactive to get emergency work done to correct these problems that were brought about as a result of the recent hurricanes. The first issue concerns our drainage system. The catch basins, the drainage culverts, etc. Under FEMA guidelines, we have contacted our state liaison with FEMA. Mr. Hubbard, I and one council member have contacted them. They have advised that if any of these infrastructure systems were damaged as a result of the hurricane FEMA will participate in the cost of repairing them. Damage includes not only structural damage such as disjointed culverts or broken gratings, it also includes debris that may be clogging any of these facilities. What we are asking tonight is for authorization to prepare emergency specifications in some of the instances and actually in the case of the first contract for drainage on the culverts authorization to sign a contract under FEMA guidelines. I am going to go over them one at a time. I am going to ask for a resolution in support of each of the contracts. The first would be and we have a brief synopsis in the administrative report that each of you have in front of you. The first would be to authorize Meyer's Engineers and we have a representative

here tonight, to work with the parish under their existing professional services contract to get the contract going for the culverts and the catch basins. They have already obtained three prices, in accordance with FEMA guidelines, to do the work. The low bidder was a company called EMR, Inc. We are asking for authorization to sign a contract, subject to legal counsel approval, to do the work. Do you have any questions regarding the first issue?"

Councilman Smith stated, "I would like to commend administration for being very proactive in getting the wheels rolling on this issue. I know we have a lot of concerns with the debris and stuff that is clogging up these culverts and stuff like that. Trees that are in the ditches and if we get any type of heavy rain or anything like that we are going to have more flooding. It is going to cause more property damage to residences and everything else. So again I do want to commend administration for being proactive on this and getting this started as soon as you did. Thank you."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "Mr. McTopy we spoke earlier about the funding sources for this. Would you let the general public know where that is coming from?"

Pat McTopy stated, "The source of local funding would be the sales tax district account that we have and funds from that account can be expended on each of these items. On drainage work and on public works work, I didn't mention and I need to that this work is necessary to reduce the threat of immediate flooding to our residents. As you know we had flooding with Hurricane Ike recently and it is necessary to reduce that threat."

**MOTION:** Councilman Lee moved and Councilman Smith seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to sign a contract with EMR, Inc., subject to legal counsel approval, to clean and clear the various catch basins and culverts of debris left in the systems as a result of Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. The motion passes with Councilman Wolfe absent.

Pat McTopy stated, "The second item pertains to the sewer system. Again we have a brief synopsis of what has happened with the sewer system. Because of the extended period of time that we lost power, those sewer lines were not functioning. They were not draining. It allowed sediment to build up in the lines. It allows solids to solidify, grease and such to solidify in some of the lines and in particular in some of the manholes. In some instances the submersible pumps became clogged with some of the debris that got into the system. We have an existing contract with URS Engineers to do sewer work and they have done extensive sewer work for the parish in the past. They are familiar with working with FEMA on this type of work. What we need to do and have started is document to lift the manhole covers, take photographs, take GPS positioning and mark each for future reference and those areas that need work. FEMA will participate in the cost and I understand the percentage is 33%. If the sewer line is 33% or more clogged up with debris, FEMA will participate. If it is less than that then we have to make a case as to why they should participate. If the manhole is caked up with solids and debris and such, FEMA will participate. So we need to implement a system to evaluate each of these systems and take corrective actions. So again we ask for a motion. If we do nothing it

can present a hazard to the general public with sewer lines backing up and contaminating the streets and stuff. So again we are asking for a resolution in support of the contract with URS doing the work and obtaining three proposals to do the construction part of the work subject to review by legal counsel."

Councilman Julien asked, "How would this affect the areas that had the most drainage issues during the recent storms?"

Pat McTopy stated, "The second storm, in particular, we didn't have a rain fall drainage issue. We had a tidal surge issue. This third one that we are going to talk about could affect the tidal flow in the sense that it would allow the water to drain out faster once it comes in. None of these issues are designed to prevent the tidal surge or the tidal flow. Mr. Hubbard is proposing and he talked to the Governor yesterday, a one stop measure would be to put check valves if you will, flappers at the end of each of the culverts under I-10. Under ordinary conditions those valves would be closed preventing the lake from backing up. Now clearly in some instances it can go around. It is not going to stop everything but it would be a significant help. The Governor was very impressed with that idea and we are going to be proceeding to try to get that through fruition. In answer to your question, n, it is not going to stop the tidal surge, but the final one well we will get to that."

Councilwoman Hotard asked, "How are we determining which catch basins or drains and sewer lines are going to be cleaned? How will that be determined?"

Pat McTopy stated, "The engineer has inspectors that are going to go out and physically lift the manhole, observe it, take notes, take photographs for the record and then at some point if it appears that the lines are blocked they will take TV cameras and will get that down there to document the condition of the line."

Councilwoman Hotard asked, "So in the case of the catch basins and culverts are they going to visually inspect all of the culverts and catch basins to see which ones they need to repair?"

Pat McTopy stated, "What I was referring to with the TV cameras would be the sewer lines. The actual culverts and catch basins they will take photographs and visual inspections and written records."

Councilwoman Hotard asked, "Will they inspect all of the culverts and the catch basins in the parish?"

Pat McTopy stated, "It is my understanding that they will. They won't necessarily clean everyone because FEMA may not participate."

**MOTION:** Councilman Julien moved and Councilman Smith seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to sign a contract with URS doing the work and obtaining three proposals to do the construction part of the work, subject to legal approval, to do the clearing out of the various sewer lines and manholes and lift stations throughout the parish that have been clogged as a result of the system being down for an extended period of time during the extended power outages caused by Hurricane Gustav. The motion passes with Councilman Wolfe absent.

Pat McTopy stated, "The third item involves ditches and canals that have accumulated significantly more debris, additional debris, as a result of the storms. In particular trees that have fallen into the canals. I was at the barber shop Tuesday. My good friend the barber was telling me that two large trees fell into Woodland Canal just by his residence. So I expect there are quite a few more up and down Woodland, as there are in many of our other canals. So we would like to have Shread-Kurkendahl, an engineer that has been working for the parish for a number of years, have them do the surveying under their existing drainage contract and based on what they find develop plans to allow at least three bidders to give us proposals to do that work."

Councilman Lewis stated, "I want to remind this council that the Lafourche Levee Board, which I am on, on the West Bank side of the river, which has about three different parishes that belong to it St. Charles, St. John, Ascension and Assumption. We go out and clean canals just on the base every year to get the trash and stuff out of it. If you have any trash over here, especially if it comes from a storm, they would be willing to work with you and whatever the cost is they would just pass it on because they have those marsh buggies and everything. We do a lot of cleaning canals throughout the parish on the other side of the river. So it is something to look at when we go out for bids. You could most probably get help a lot cheaper with the levee board than we could with somebody else."

Councilman Julien asked, "Would this work be handled by individuals from the parish? Would any of our people be able to get the work?"

Pat McTopy stated, "If any of our people are interested in the work they can contact myself or Clifford Bailey and we will put them in touch with the firm soliciting proposals."

**MOTION:** Councilwoman Usry moved and Councilman Smith seconded the motion to authorize administration to allow Shread-Kuyrkendhal to do surveying under their existing contract and based on what they find develop plans to allow at least three bidders to give us proposals to do the cleaning of various ditches and canals that have become blocked by fallen trees and possibly sediment caused by Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. The motion passes with Councilman Wolfe absent.

Bill Hubbard, Parish President, stated, "I would like to thank the council again for helping get this started and for your support. This work is necessary to the residents of the parish. Thanks again."

**ADJOURNMENT:**

At 6:15 PM, Councilman Lee moved and Councilman Smith seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion passed with Councilman Wolfe absent.

/s/Jaclyn Hotard  
CHAIRMAN

/s/Jackie Landeche  
COUNCIL SECRETARY