



ST. TAMMANY PARISH

PATRICIA P. BRISTER
PARISH PRESIDENT

September 26, 2018

Dear Council Chairwoman and Members,

Today, I present for your consideration and approval, St. Tammany Parish Government's Operating and Capital Budgets for 2019.

As you are aware, as we prepared these budgets, we rose to the challenge of the reality of the stark decline in revenues and funding sources. We prepared for this possibility in our 2018 budget by a \$10 million reduction in operating expenses, the institution of a hiring freeze, and the elimination of cost-of-living and merit raises for Parish Government employees.

The 2019 Operating and Capital budgets reflect the continuation of our strategic decision-making in order to further reduce, reorganize, and refocus Parish Government. Total expenditures in both budgets have decreased by another 12% — a reduction of \$15.6 million. We have significantly lessened the non-state mandated burden to the General Fund — our only source of undedicated revenue — by \$4.4 million in Parish Operations from 2018, which includes reductions in Parish Administration, Facilities, and Development. We have worked hard to achieve these efficiencies and as such, we were faced with the necessity of a reduction in workforce, which resulted in lay-offs of 24 employees affecting nearly every department, at every level. In order to remove the burden to the General Fund for the costs of Parish Facilities, we are utilizing funding from economic development sources or simply not funding them. To remove the General Fund burden for the expenses of the Department of Planning and Development, we have created an enterprise fund which will enable the department to become self-sustaining.

The total 2019 state-mandated costs are projected at \$18.2 million. State-mandated costs include expenditures of the following: the St. Tammany Parish Jail, the 22nd Judicial District Court, the District Attorney of the 22nd Judicial District (as well as the Civil Division), the Public Defender of the 22nd Judicial District, the Registrar of Voters, the Clerk of Court, the Assessor, Veterans Affairs, and Ward Courts. Funding for these expenditures will be met through the consumption of General Fund and Public Health current year revenues and \$4.8 million in General Fund and Justice Center fund balances. Public Health funds will be utilized for Jail medical costs, and Justice Center fund balance will be used for the costs of these agencies' operations and the associated space allocations for the buildings occupied in both Covington and Slidell.

In spite of the foregoing, we will continue to provide quality services to our residents. The budget includes a budgeted 17% increase in infrastructure operational costs in the areas of Public Works, Drainage, Environmental Services, and Tammany Utilities.

We are going to take this as an opportunity to start anew and refocus on our core responsibilities. We will continue to increase efficiencies in the ways we operate to assist in the achievement of the needs of the taxpayers through infrastructure-related projects and initiatives including our Capital Improvement Plan, Water Quality, Storm-Water Management and Drainage Improvement projects. Thank you for your consideration in adopting these budgets.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patricia P. Brister".

Patricia P. Brister
Parish President
St. Tammany Parish Government