

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
PUBLIC SAFETY FUNDING AD HOC COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 14rd DAY OF AUGUST, 2023

The Caddo Parish Public Safety Funding Ad Hoc Committee met in legal session on the above date, at 2:40 p.m., in the Government Plaza First Floor Conference Room, with Mr. Epperson, Chairman, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cothran, Chavez, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jackson and Young (8). ABSENT: None (0).

The invocation was given by Mr. Young, and Mr. Chavez led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Epperson requested the Administration provide an update regarding tree and debris pickup. Mrs. Bryant explained that debris pick up was ongoing, that District 12 and 10 was being worked on, and that there was no specific deadline for debris pickup. Mrs. Bryant reported that the Parish is working with the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) to receive 75% reimbursement for debris removal and that the Administration is coordinating with the City of Shreveport for the City to receive 75% reimbursement as well.

The Chair requested the Clerk to report on the invitation to Homeland Security and the Public Service Commission to attend the meeting. The Clerk advised that a response was not received from the Public Service Commission and the Homeland Security was unable to attend. The Clerk explained that the Homeland Security Department was assisting the Small Business Association with setting up a Disaster Loan Outreach Center. Mr. Epperson discussed the staffing and business of the Homeland Security Department. Mrs. Bryant indicated that the Administration would confirm specific dates and a representative from the Homeland Security. Answering Mr. Burrell, Mrs. Bryant discussed the Parish's precedent to declare an emergency and the Homeland Security Department's responsibility to coordinate the processes of the emergency.

- Follow Up Discussions From August 2nd Meeting Regarding Storm Response, Recovery, Etc.

Dr. Martha Whyte, Medical Director with Public Health, discussed the change from tracking covid by case numbers to an Emergency Room (ER) surveillance system through Sentinel Physician Offices. It was explained that covid would be treated like the flu by tracking treatments to covid-like illnesses. Dr. Whyte explained covid variants from the omicron strain and the new covid booster vaccine to defend against the new covid variants. Dr. Whyte explained the rapid spread of the new omicron variants and how significant the symptoms were. Mr. Epperson discussed the expensive cost of covid tests at emergency clinics since the national emergency for covid was rescinded, which Dr. Whyte indicated that she would research the cost of covid tests. Dr. Whyte indicated that covid would be around like the flu.

Mr. Michael Corbin, External Affairs Manager AEP SWEPCO, reported that work crews seek out dead limbs hung in trees or have fallen from trees, and that the abundance of large limbs and trees that have caused scattered outages. Mr. Corbin explained that SWEPCO is a unique operating company within AEP and that SWEPCO reports to AEP. Mr. Corbin indicated that SWEPCO makes their decisions locally and are partners with the Public Service Commission of Louisiana. Mr. Corbin discussed vegetation management and how SWEPCO implements tree/bush burning. Mr. Epperson discussed citizen concern about a utility company's responsibility to clear vegetation growth on utility poles and lines. Mr. Epperson suggested SWEPCO do aggressive tree trimming. Mr. Corbin explained that SWEPCO trims vegetation to protect its power lines and does not trim phone lines. Mr. Epperson suggested SWEPCO collaborates to target overgrowth on power lines. Mr. Corbin discussed how trees impact utility service. Answering Burrell, Mr. Corbin explained that ATT owns over one third of poles in Shreveport and SWEPCO may clear vegetation from poles that may not be a hazard to the utility service that SWEPCO provides. Mr. Corbin clarified that the expectation for SWEPCO to do all trimming to protect every wire on a pole including wires that are not electricity would impact utility rates. Mr. Corbin discussed the lack of tree maintenance for trees near utility lines and that Swepco is not responsible to tell other utility service providers to clear their utility lines.

Answering Mr. Chavez about one-sided tree trimming causing leaning, Mr. Corbin explained SWEPCO's responsibility to protect its assets and the controversy of tree trimming.

Mr. Cothran inquired about leaning poles, which Mr. Corbin explained SWEPCO'S process to address the hazard and provided 888-316-2523 as the number to report

It was **moved by Mr. Epperson**, seconded by Mr. Cothran, *to recommend that there be a Citizens Disaster Response, Recovery and Review Committee.*

Mr. Epperson discussed the purpose of the citizen committee to represent the community

and that the citizen committee would consist of one individual from each Commission district and one citizen appointed from the Administration.

Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: Commissioners Burrell, Cothran, Chavez, Epperson, Gage-Watts, and Jackson (6). NAYS: Commissioner Atkins, and Young (2). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

- Discuss Public Health Concerns- Silver Lake Apartments, Water Access, Dangerous Heat, Etc.

Mr. Epperson discussed citizens living in sub-par conditions in the dangerous heat temperatures. The Administration reported on Mr. Epperson's request to look into what the Commission could do. Mrs. Bryant explained that Mr. Epperson requested Administration advise him on funding to keep citizens alive. Mrs. Bryant reported that Bonne Moore (City of Shreveport Community Development Department) coordinated with the Administration on the Silver Lake Apartments issue and found that the property was abandoned by its management and some residents had evacuated. Mrs. Bryant explained the Commission's allocation to Hope Foundation for temporary housing, and to Providence House for relocation assistance for long term housing, which the abandoned tenants could use those resources. Mrs. Bryant indicated that the Administration is working towards relocation assistance to include first-month deposit and moving assistance. Mrs. Bryant explained that the facilities did not have water or electricity and there were children that started school who reside at the facility. Mrs. Gage-Watts advised that an emergency declaration from the LA Governor for extreme heat conditions. Mrs. Gage-Watts requested the Administration to research the available funding sources to assist with the disaster. Mrs. Gage-Watts requested that the Administration report on the plan for the Silver Lake Apartments and what the City of Shreveport would do with the property. Mr. Cothran discussed the concern of school students that reside at the Silver Lake Apartments without utilities. Mr. Epperson requested Mrs. Bryant to coordinate with Mrs. Bonnie Moore, other City and Parish personnel for a press conference on the Parish's actions regarding the Silver Lake Apartments for the next day. Mrs. Bryant indicated that a written press release would be published. Mr. Young and Mrs. Bryant clarified the absence of the property management and that tenants had no utilities or evictions because there was no management.

The Clerk reported on behalf of the Homeland Security Department that the Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster loans are available and open for applications. The deadline to apply for a disaster loan is August 25th. The SBA is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Applications are available online at disasterloanassistance.sba.gov. Categories of loans include up to \$5,000 for home owner real estate repairs, up to \$100,000 for homeowners and renters to replace personal property, businesses are eligible for up to \$2 million to repair/replace real estate, machinery and equipment, and small businesses are eligible for up to \$2 million for economic injury. The Clerk reported that the loans are low interest and for more information call 1-800-659-2955. Mrs. Bryant indicated that an SBA representative would provide a report during the Work Session Administration Report.

There was no further discussion to come before the Commission, so the meeting was adjourned at 3:27 p.m.



Linda J. Montgomery
Administrative Specialist I