

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
OF THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION
HELD ON THE 20th DAY OF MAY, 2024

The Caddo Parish Commission met in a Work Session, on the above date, at 3:30 p.m., in the Government Chambers, with Mr. John Paul Young, presiding, and the following members in attendance constituting a quorum: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Kracman, Lazarus, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (12). ABSENT: None (0).

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

AGENDA ADDITIONS

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mr. J. Young, *that the agenda be expanded to add MSgt. Tawana Jackson as a Visitor for Thursday's Regular Session.*

There being no one to speak in favor or against the agenda addition, the President closed the public hearing.

At this time, Mr. Thomas' motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Kracman, Lazarus, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (10). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioners Gage-Watts and Jones (2). ABSTAIN: None (0).

This item was added as a New Business item.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Jon Glover came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

As I looked over you all's Work Session agenda this past weekend, I had a question about two agenda items...really three. The first two agenda items—they seem to be NGOs. Now, if they're not NGOs, then I would like for someone to tell me otherwise what they represent. Two, I need to understand what time period are we looking to get the funding from with the Riverboat funds? In the legislation, it says \$5k, but in the exhibit, it says \$15k is being asked for it. The language of both of those legislations mirror each other, so I'm having a problem with that too. How is it that two supposedly separate and apart legislations mirror each other, and the dollar amounts as well? I know that we were in Appropriations meeting not long ago—maybe a couple of week or so ago—and that process was addressed. It was said that there would be no bending of the rules to address any item outside the scope of what was agreed upon that day. Now, again, I need to understand what—where do these funds coming from? Are they coming from the 2023 funds that are supposed to end June 2023? Or are we going into the next NGOs for 2024? What are we really doing here? Then there was another piece of legislation—let's see, 6429 of 2024. There was an event Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity had already held. Why are we giving them money after the fact? I don't understand that. I do appreciate you all hearing what I have today, and I ask that indeed, get an explanation as to—with regard to the first items I brought before you, which were Ordinance 6432 of 2024 and Ordinance 6433 of 2024. I'm not opposing the effort; I'm opposing how this process is being handled. Thank you.

Michael Williams came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman to this august body and members of this horseshoe. I rise to the floor just to say there are times we have to have emergency and catastrophic situations happen where we have to amend the budget for emergency things, such as criminal and justice reform, welfare reform, and economic development. These are one of those times. I rise to say that I stand with these two agencies that's been doing the work in the community providing their time and effort and money to be able to have an event for fathers. We know that statistics say that there was 18.3 million families in America that live without a father in the home, which caused welfare. We have, of course, the highest incarceration rate per capita in the entire world in the State of Louisiana. Of course, juveniles has been the second highest in 21 in this country. We know it costs \$145k to house on juvenile inmate. We have a 24 bed facility. To help reconnect families back to the fathers called faith, family, and father initiative right out of New York. It was founded in Philadelphia, part of the National Association of County—there are thirty other counties and states across America who's initiated this initiative here. Why we always go to be the last? Why can't we be first? This is an inclusive initiative. We want to recognize the men and women in our community, but the men in our community, however, that never get recognized. For fathers that work in the foxhole—they provide the basic fundamental service to their children. We also have the Honey Badger from the New Orleans Saints will be one of the video speakers. Chief—Sheriff Elect Whitehorn's going to be the keynote speaker. There's going to be children having an essay to talk about why their fathers should be Father of the Year. A good event is going to be here. Anyway, it's not operating capital—it's the event capital funding, which is private sector. We do have complimentary tickets for those that live in the community that you see in your neighborhood that you want to recognize. Fathers that just trying to make a difference for food and shelter for their families in the community. So, we're excited about this initiative, and we're looking to public-private partnership. Private funding—I already bought myself, volunteering my time, my effort, which was initiative to facilitate this. Of course, the PIPES chairman is not here. He's in Washington, D.C. at the United

States Senate speaking before the Judiciary Committee—uh, Corey Buckle to talk about criminal justice reform and prison labor. I've also been talking to the University in Switzerland, Mr. Terrance Winn, and another gentleman is now here. His name is Andrea Lyles. He has a special guest here to be here and speak. So, with that being said, I pray that you would vote unanimously for these initiative that's going to benefit the community of Shreveport and Caddo. I think its long overdue for something like this to reduce crime and put fathers, faith, and family back together. Based on research, it's an evidence-based research, and this has been studied by some of the practitioners throughout American and NACo as well. So I hope and pray that this body will vote unanimously for it. If you have any questions, I'll be able to answer any question. Thank you.

Curtis Graham came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

I am here representing CLG, which is Children of God, and our initiative is to give a show of faith by making an investment, commitment, and loving unconditionally to the people that are in our community. I'd like to share with you a few moments of what we are about. We formed back in 2020 in the Mooretown area. There were some apartments on the corner of Kennedy Drive and Illinois Street. Back during that time, in 2020, if not everyday, then every week, there was shootings in those apartments. Our first initiative when we first got organized was to go into that area and to do something to help the people in that area. What we did the first time we went over there—one Saturday morning with trashcan liners in our hands, and we picked up the trash along through those apartments. That is our way to show a different image to the people that live in those apartments. We went on to pray at the end of each session when we went over there. I want to tell you the difference that we have made in those apartments—there were no more shootings I think since then. I've heard maybe a couple on the news, but prior to that, almost every week, there was some shooting that was reported in the news in those apartments. We have gone over there since then, every year. We're going over there on Martin Luther Kind Day; we're going over there on Father's Day, Mother's Day; and even on Black History Month. Annually, we're doing a revival over there. I want to tell you all the things that we have done has made a difference with the people over there in those apartments. Our intention is to help and give hope. We believe that without help and without hope, there is no life. So I have time to continue to give life to the people who are marginalized—who was on the ed of society and offer something different other than despair and hopelessness. Thank you.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

- GFOA Budget Award

Mrs. Bryant announced that the Caddo Parish Commission's Finance Department was able to obtain the GFOA Budget Award once again. She congratulated Mrs. Barnett and her team on this achievement.

- Government Plaza Security Updates

Mrs. Bryant said that they have met with the City regarding the security updates. The City will provide a draft of the recommendations, and those will be summarized and submitted to the Commission when they are received.

- April 2024 Finance

Mrs. Bryant said that the April 2024 Financial Statements were attached to the agenda, as well as, being placed at each Commissioners' desk.

- Juvenile Detention

Mrs. Bryant said that there are twenty-three children in the Detention Center; two of which are OJJ. There are five 17-year olds, and thirteen children at CCC. There are 572 children on probation.

- Parks & Recreation Grant

Mrs. Bryant announced that the Parks & Recreation Department will be receiving a \$690k from the Land & Water Conservation Fund.

- Commission Response

Mr. Burrell requested an update on the passenger rail. He wanted to know if this was presented to the Legislature; if not, he would like this to be presented to the Legislature. Mrs. Bryant said that the Legislature is deep in their session with not much time left, but they could look into doing this for the next session. Mr. Burrell would like the lobbyists to give him a call to discuss this matter further.

Mr. Thomas wanted to talk about the issues with the apartment complexes. Mrs. Bryant said that those complexes are within the City's purview.

Mr. Epperson received a call this morning regarding a mobile home park who are going through the same situation with the apartment complexes. He wanted to know if the Commission has contributed any funds to help some of the displaced residents. Mrs. Bryant said that the Parish provides

funding through Providence House with relocation assistance. Mr. Epperson wanted to know where these funds are coming from. Mrs. Bryant said that some of it is ARPA funds, and some of it comes from the Emergency Fund.

MASTER PLAN REPORT

Mrs. Laura Neubert came before the Commission and gave the PZC Master Plan Report. She said that the PZC attempted to send over a resolution to the Commission for consideration for funds for the PZC to help redo the zoning for Caddo Parish. She mentioned that the UDC online is about 118 pages. She said that there are 14 residential codes, 6 commercial codes, 6 downtown codes, and several other codes for the rural area. Some of these codes do not apply to Caddo Parish, she said. Mrs. Neubert further explained the UDC is pretty much a mirror reflection of the City's UDC. The PZC would like to revamp UDC as it applies to the rural areas of the Parish.

Mrs. Neubert gave an example of her zoning that was changed. She has fifteen acres of land, and it was changed to where she cannot have horses, livestock, etc. due to the changes of the UDC.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know what is the process of reevaluating the UDC. Mrs. Neubert said that there's a thought that the PZC could redline the ordinances and offer it to the Commission for consideration. She said that the question is, would a new Master Plan have to be implemented to change the UDC? Mrs. Neubert explained that whatever the avenues are, there will be a cost. She also mentioned that the PZC does not have the authority to rewrite the UDC. She feels that the UDC could be a lot simpler.

Mr. Kracman wanted to know how many cases the PZC has denied. Mrs. Neubert said probably two. He agreed that the UDC should be revamped.

Mr. Kracman also wanted to know what the issues were with regards to the PZC's resolutions. Attorney Bernstein said that the scope of the changes would be a fairly significant rewrite. He said that this is not currently in the scope of what the Parish is paying the MPC.

Mrs. Neubert also mentioned that even when the codes are rewritten, the GIS zoning map also has to be updated.

She also said that the businesses along the Hwy 1 Corridor are being annexed into Blanchard because their zoning is easier to deal with. The same thing is happening with the Town of Greenwood.

Mr. Burrell wanted to know the result of HB 697 and Act 294. Mrs. Neubert said that there was a separation of the two zoning boards—the City has the MPC, and the Parish has the PZC. Mr. Burrell said that during his time on the legislation, "if you create legislation, you put money where you mouth is, and if that wasn't done and it was placed back on the Parish or the City, then we may have a problem".

Mrs. Neubert asked the Commission for permission, direction, and the funds to rewrite the UDC.

It was **moved by Mr. Epperson**, seconded by Mr. J. Young, *that this discussion be held in the Long Range Planning Committee. Motion carried*, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Kracman, Lazarus, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (12). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

COMMISSION REMARKS

- Mr. Epperson said that the Veterans Celebration Committee, in conjunction with the Pines Road Area Business Association, will be hosting its annual Memorial Day Service on Thursday, May 23 at Bill Cockrell Park.

NEW BUSINESS

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *to englobo and move the following Ordinances to Thursday's Regular Session for introduction:*

- *Ordinance No. 6432 of 2024, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Riverboat Fund to provide an appropriation for Children of God, Inc., and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6433 of 2024, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Riverboat Fund to provide an appropriation for Priority, Intentions, Practical Exchanges (PIPES) Inc., and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

Mr. Thomas asked for the Commissioners' support on these ordinances.

Substitute motion by Mr. Cothran, seconded by Mr. G. Young, *that the following*

ordinances be remanded to the NGO Appropriations Committee:

- *Ordinance No. 6432 of 2024, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Riverboat Fund to provide an appropriation for Children of God, Inc., and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6433 of 2024, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Riverboat Fund to provide an appropriation for Priority, Intentions, Practical Exchanges (PIPES) Inc., and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

Mr. Cothran said that neither one of these ordinances have been vetted in the NGO Committee.

Friendly amendment by Mr. Jones that the ordinances be remanded to the NGO Committee, but also introduced during Thursday's Regular Session. Mr. Cothran declined.

Mr. Cothran said that ordinances are being placed on the agenda without being vetted through the NGO Committee. He explained that the rules and regulations should be adhered to.

Mr. Jones mentioned that this is a timing issue because the event would pass before a voted could be had.

At this time, Mr. Cothran's substitute motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Cothran, Jones, Kracman, Lazarus, G. Young, and J. Young (8). NAYS: Commissioners Burrell, Epperson, Gage-Watts, and Thomas (4). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

Mr. Cothran said that the NGO Committee will meet on Thursday, May 23 at 2:00 p.m.

It was **moved by Mr. Epperson**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, that Resolution No. 36 of 2024, a resolution adopting the Caddo Parish Parks ADA Transition Plan, and otherwise providing with respect thereto be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration.

Substitute motion by Mrs. Gage-Watts, seconded by Mr. Epperson, to englobo and move the following items to Thursday's agenda for consideration:

- *Resolution No. 36 of 2024, a resolution adopting the Caddo Parish Parks ADA Transition Plan, and otherwise providing with respect thereto*
- *Resolution No. 37 of 2024, a resolution obligating funds to Land & Water Conservation Fund Project*
- *Special Resolution for National Maritime Day*
- *Special Resolution for Shericka Clay*
- *Special Resolution for LaBria Small*
- *Special Resolution for Austin Small-Jones*
- *Special Resolution for Paula Crosby*
- *Proclamation Mental Health Awareness Month*
- *Appointment of Shirley Hamilton to the Pine Hill Waterworks District No. 8. Term to expire May 20, 2029*
- *MSgt. Tawana Jackson as Visitor for Thursday's Regular Session*

Mr. Atkins asked for more clarity on receiving federal funding for the Parks grant. Mrs. Bryant said that the Parks & Recreations Department received a grant fund, and part of the process is passing a resolution from the Commission body.

At this time, Mrs. Gage-Watts' motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Kracman, Lazarus, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (12). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mrs. Gage-Watts**, seconded by Mr. J. Young, that the Commission convene into Executive Session related to Caddo Suit #649,834 with Mrs. Bryant, Mr. Walker, Attorney Frazier, Attorney Bernstein, Commission Clerk Everson, and the Commissioners present. Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Kracman, Lazarus, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (12). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT:

None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

The Commission reconvened. There were no Communiques or Citizens Comments.

CONSENT AGENDA

- *Ordinance No. 6417 of 2024, an ordinance to amend Volume II of the Code of Ordinances of the Parish of Caddo, as amended, the Caddo Parish Unified Development Code, by amending the zoning of property located east side of David Raines Road of Audrey Lane, approximately 530' north of 7th Street, Caddo Parish, Louisiana, from R-A, Rural-Agricultural Zoning District to R-1-7 Single Family Residential Zoning District, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6429 of 2024, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Economic Development Fund to provide an appropriation for Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6430 of 2024, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Riverboat Fund to provide an appropriation for Hope Connections and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6431 of 2024, an ordinance declaring certain adjudicated properties to be surplus and to authorize the Parish Administrator, or a designee, to sell the Parish of Caddo's tax interest in certain surplus adjudicated properties and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

At this time, there was no further discussion to come before the Commission, so the Commission adjourned at 4:45 p.m.


Assistant to the Commission Clerk