

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
NGO APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 8th DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2024

The Caddo Parish NGO Appropriations Committee met in legal session on the above date at 2:00 p.m., in the Government Plaza Chambers Conference Room, with Mr. Cothran, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Atkins, Cothran, Thomas, and G. Young (4). ABSENT: Commissioners Gage-Watts and J. Young (2).

Mr. G. Young gave the invocation, and Mr. Atkins led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance. There being no Agenda Additions or Citizens Comments, the Committee moved to New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Discuss and summarize 2024 NGO Funding and the Commission funding process*

Mr. Cothran explained that the reason for this meeting is to give an overview of the NGO process for the new Commissioners and a refresher of the process for the returning Commissioners.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know if Mr. Cothran is looking to "tighten up the process". Mr. Cothran said that he is looking more towards clarifying exactly what the process is.

Mrs. Hayley Barnett, Finance Director, explained that the NGO typically starts in May/June where Finance sends out application to all entities who were previously funded, as well as any new entity that requests an application. From then, a hard deadline is set when applications are due. If applications are late, it is noted on their app. Once all of the applications are received, the Finance team puts together a summary sheet explaining the project, expected outcomes, project design, etc. If it is an economic development application, then an economic development study is requested. After the summaries are completed, they are provided to the NGO Committee/Economic Development Committee for scoring. Once all of the scores are received, a spreadsheet is made and provided to the respective committees. If an entity scores less than 60, they will not be considered. Mrs. Barnett also mentioned that they do require the NGOs to attend trainings so they are aware of how they're scored, how to receive their funds, how to report their funds, etc.

Mrs. Barnett also pointed out that the Parish does not want to be the sole source of funding for an NGO, so after three years, the Parish will require the NGO to look for other funding sources. She said that this policy was put in place in BY 2023 and will start to be captured in BY 2026.

Mrs. Barnett also mentioned that Administration does not control the vote of the Committee nor the vote of the Commission body, but Finance does notate any disqualifying factors on the applications.

Mr. G. Young asked for clarification if the Commission can override any policy in place. Mrs. Barnett reiterated that the Administration does not control the vote of the Commission body. Mr. G. Young suggested that the Committee and Commission body needs to decide as to whether or not there are hard qualifications of the NGOs.

Mr. Atkins agreed and said that rules are only as good as people are willing to follow them. He also said that the NGO process has improved over the years.

Mr. J. Young wanted to know if there was a list of NGOs who were allocated funding, but didn't meet the criteria. Mrs. Barnett said that she can think of only one organization who received funding, but it was on the day of adoption. That NGO didn't even apply for the funding. At that point, it's in y'all's hands, she said. Mr. J. Young requested a listing of NGOs who have not been in operation for two years, turned in their application late, didn't meet the criteria, etc. Mr. J. Young then asked if there were any NGOs who received funding that were not two years old. He also wanted to know if there were any NGOs who received funding that submitted their applications late or anyone who received funding even if they scored under 60%.

Mr. J. Young also mentioned that a Commissioner cannot sit on a board of an organization who receives funding from the Commission. He would like to see if there are any exceptions to this rule. Attorney Frazier encourages any Commissioner sitting on an NGO board to get an Ethics Opinion as to whether or not they can remain on that board while receiving funding from the Parish. She also explained that there have been instances where Commissioners are affiliated with NGOs and have recused themselves from voting.

Mrs. Bryant said that combing through these NGO applications is a lot of work, but she appreciates the Committee for vetting the applications and following the guidelines. She also pointed out that the Caddo Community Action Agency is not a part of the NGO process.

Mr. Atkins talked about the NGO Committee and the Economic Development Committee.

He explained that the big difference is that the Economic Development applicants are required to submit a study illustrating the positive return on investments.

The Clerk of the Commission wanted to know when was appropriate time to make an amendment for the NGOs if a Commissioner is not on the NGO Committee. Mrs. Bryant said that all of the Commissioners receive the applications. Attorney Frazier also explained that the recommendations from the NGO Committee still has to go before the full body, so the amendments could be made on the day of adoption.

At this time, there was no further discussion to come before the Commission, so the Commission adjourned at 2:38 p.m.


Assistant to the Commission Clerk