

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
PUBLIC SAFETY FUNDING COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 1ST DAY OF JULY, 2024

The Caddo Parish Public Safety Funding Committee met in legal session on the above date at 12:30 p.m., in the Government Plaza Chambers, with Mr. Epperson, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Epperson, Gage-Watts, Thomas, and G. Young (4). ABSENT: Commissioner J. Young (1).

The Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation were given during a previous committee meeting. There were no Agenda Additions or Public Comments, so the Committee moved onto New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Mr. William Bradford, SWEPCO, to give an update on power outages and storm responses*

Mr. Epperson said that Caddo Parish is having issues with power outages due to storms and inclement weather.

He then talked about the overpayment that SWEPCO found. Some of his constituents are requesting that these monies be spent on cleaning up the right-of-ways to prevent power outages.

Mr. Epperson then talked about the Citizens Disaster Response Committee. He would like each Commissioner to submit three names from their respective district. Once the committee is formed, they will get their charge, he said.

At this time, Mr. Epperson scheduled a Citizens Disaster Response Committee for Thursday, July 25 at 1:00 p.m. He would like to invite a representative from Homeland Security, SWEPCO, elected officials, Public Works, Caddo 911, etc. Their charge will be the "eyes and ears" in their respective communities when disaster strikes.

Mr. G. Young wanted to know if there were additional members being added to the list. Mr. Epperson said that each Commissioner is allotted three members.

Mr. Thomas said that the original number of appointees per Commissioner was two, but he is not opposed to three members.

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *to increase the number of appointees to three per Commissioner.* Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Epperson, Gage-Watts, Thomas, and G. Young (4). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner J. Young (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

The Clerk of the Commission reminded the Committee members that the resolution establishing the Citizens Disaster Committee will need to be amended and will show up on the meeting cycle.

Mrs. Gage-Watts suggested that a representative from the Housing Authority be present during the July 25th meeting. Mr. Epperson said that this committee's charge is for natural disasters, not those types of issues.

The Clerk of the Commission pointed out that Mr. Mike Corbin, SWEPCO, is in attendance.

Mr. Corbin said that this discussion began approximately a year ago. SWEPCO's focus would be as much preparatory work and information that they could get out to citizens as quickly as possible. Messaging to include preparation for multiple day outages is one the best things we can do for our citizens, Mr. Corbin said.

Mrs. Gage-Watts wanted to know what type of services are being provided to the citizens who are on oxygen machines. Mr. Corbin said that there is a misconception with citizens and elected officials that if you sign a medical waiver that you're moved to the head of the list for restoration. Mr. Corbin said that is simply not the case. The medical exemption notes in SWEPCO's system is for additional time before SWEPCO can cutoff services. Mrs. Gage-Watts thanked Mr. Corbin for clearing up that misconception.

Mrs. Gage-Watts then wanted to know if there was communication between SWEPCO and the Lighthouse Projects. Mr. Corbin said that they do not have any direct communication with them. He said that best thing a citizen or elected official could do is call SWEPCO and report the outages prior to contacting their elected officials. Mrs. Gage-Watts suggested that SWEPCO work with the Lighthouse Projects to form a cohesive plan to help the citizens. Mr. Corbin agreed and said that they work with the Office of Homeland Security, United Way, 211, etc., and suggested that the Lighthouses be apart of those discussions.

Mr. G. Young said that there is technology out there to determine leaks in water lines. He wanted to know if something like this is implemented to determine exactly where power outages are. Mr.

Corbin said that they are currently implementing AMI meters, and when it is finished, they will know when any customer is out of power and when they will come back on. Mr. G. Young wanted to know when this will be available. Mr. Corbin said that this should be completed by the end of the year.

Mr. William Bradford approached the podium and wanted to know if there were any questions that the Committee had. He will provide his contact information to the Clerk of the Commission.

- *Update on traffic cameras*

Mrs. Bryant said that they were in "wait and see" mode due to the passing of Act 103 that was signed by the Governor. Legal reviewed the act and determined that they can proceed within the confines of the law to establish traffic cameras. They will be reviewing the RFPs within the next week or two, as well as, determining the procedures for fines. This information will be brought back before the Commission. Mrs. Bryant said that they will also work with the new Sheriff to determine the guidelines of the project. She said that they will continue forward and determine a vendor.

- *Discussion on the War on Litter with Lauren Jones, Executive Director for Shreveport Green*

Mr. Epperson requested that Ms. Lauren Jones receives a copy of Resolution No. 42 of 2024.

Mr. Epperson then said that there are so many ordinances and slogans telling people not to litter, but it is not being enforced. He also believes that crime and litter go hand in hand. Caddo Parish has fifteen compactor sites, he said, there's no reason for it. Mr. Epperson said that a one-day litter cleanup per year is not cutting it. He suggested that local businesses have signs displayed saying, 'I appreciate your business, but please don't litter.' Mr. Epperson said that education during the backpack giveaways, NGOs, afterschool programs, etc. should be instilled in the citizens. He would like to see the Caddo Parish webpage focusing on litter. He suggested that a press conference be held at one of the compactor sites regarding litter.

Mr. Epperson would like Shreveport Green to be called Caddo Green.

Ms. Lauren Jones, Executive Director for Shreveport Green, said that the organization is throughout Caddo Parish and Northwest Louisiana. She agreed that one big cleanup each year is not going to cut it.

Ms. Jones looks at litter as a symptom of a different problem. She feels that if everyone is a little more connected to their environment, they would respect it more. When I go out and I see something that is well-maintained, I'm not going to want to throw a plastic bottle on it, she said. Ms. Jones said that the litter problem needs to be over encompassing everything. Picking up litter is reactive, not proactive. We need to figure out why, she said.

Ms. Jones brought swag for the Commissioners that has 855-LA-LITTER on it. Citizens can call this number to report people dumping litter. Once a report is made, a letter will be mailed to the address on the license plate. After your first offense, Wildlife & Fisheries will go to the address on the license plate and let the person know that they've been caught littering. On the third offense, there will be a fine.

Ms. Jones also mentioned the possibility of having a compactor site within the city limits of Shreveport. Keep Louisiana Beautiful created a curriculum for students beginning in Kindergarten to educate them on the effects of littering.

Ms. Jones then talked about the Clean Business program that was created by Donna Curtis. She said that businesses can adopt different daily habits to help clean litter around their area and encourage their customers to do the same.

Mr. Epperson would like to change the littering signs to catch citizens' attention better.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 1:27 p.m.



Michelle Nations
Assistant to the Commission Clerk