

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION  
OF THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION  
HELD ON THE 3RD DAY OF JULY, 2024

The Caddo Parish Commission met in a Regular 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, Lazarus, Thomas, and G. Young (10). ABSENT: Commissioners Kracman and J. Young (2).

Mrs. Blake gave the invocation, and Mr. Epperson led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance. There being no Agenda Additions or Citizens Comments, the Commission moved onto the next item on the agenda. Mrs. Gage-Watts said that the scheduled visitor, Be the Match, will come to the first meeting in August.

**ADOPT REGULAR SESSION MINUTES**

It was **moved by Mr. Jones**, seconded by Mr. Cothran, *that the Regular Session Minutes from June 20, 2024 be adopted.* Motion carried.

**SPECIAL RESOLUTIONS**

It was **moved by Mr. Jones**, seconded by Mr. Cothran, *to englobo and adopt the following Special Resolutions:*

- *Proclamation recognizing July as African American Bone Marrow Awareness Month*
- *Special Resolution of Welcome & Recognition for the Foster Family Reunion*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition for Saundra Bigham's Retirement*

Mrs. Bigham thanked the Commission for honoring her today.

Mr. Thomas commended Mrs. Bigham for all of her contributions to the Parish and this community.

Mrs. Bryant congratulated Mrs. Bigham and thanked her for being such a wonderful person and a joy in her life.

Mrs. Gage-Watts thanked Mrs. Bigham for everything she has done for the students of Caddo Parish and is extremely grateful for all of the hard work she has poured into the community.

Mr. Burrell wished Mrs. Bigham well on all of her future endeavors.

At this time, Mr. Jones' motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Lazarus, Thomas, and G. Young (9). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioners Burrell, Kracman, and J. Young (3). ABSTAIN: None (0).

**PROCLAMATION  
AFRICAN AMERICAN BONE MARROW AWARENESS MONTH**

WHEREAS, bone marrow transplants are a critical treatment for patients with life-threatening diseases such as leukemia, lymphoma, and sick cell anemia; and

WHEREAS, African Americans face unique challenges in finding matching bone marrow donors due to the genetic diversity within the community, making it significantly harder to find compatible donors; and

WHEREAS, National African American Bone Marrow Awareness Month, observed each July, aims to raise awareness about the importance of bone marrow donation and the need for more African American donors to join the national registry; and

WHEREAS, increasing the number of African American bone marrow donors is vital to saving lives and improving health outcomes for patients in need of a transplant; and

WHEREAS, organizations such as Be The Match and the National Marrow Donor Program are instrumental in their efforts to recruit diverse donors and educate the public on the importance of bone marrow donation; and

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission acknowledges the significance of these efforts and supports initiatives to encourage African Americans to register as bone marrow donors;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, that the month of July 2024 is hereby recognized as:

**'AFRICAN AMERICAN BONE MARROW AWARENESS MONTH'**

in Caddo Parish, Louisiana, and encourage all Parish employees and citizens to encourage all residents to learn about the bone marrow donation process and consider joining the national registry to help save lives.

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF WELCOME & RECOGNITION  
FOSTER FAMILY REUNION**

This Special Resolution of Recognition was not attached to the agenda.

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION  
SAUNDRA BIGHAM'S RETIREMENT**

WHEREAS, it is the sense of this Commission that those individuals who enhance the well-being and vitality of our community through their dedicated services should be commended and acknowledged; and

WHEREAS, Sandra Bigham, an esteemed member of the Southern University at Shreveport (SUSLA) family, is retiring from her role as Director of Curriculum and Planning after 30 years of exemplary service; and

WHEREAS, Sandra Bigham is celebrated not only for her professional achievements but also for her entrepreneurial spirit as the owner of Sassie Sandy's Costumes & Special Events; and

WHEREAS, Sandra Bigham's contributions extend to her founding roles in two Mardi Gras Krewes, the Krewe of Sobek and the Krewe of Harambee, enriching the cultural fabric of our community; and

WHEREAS, Sandra Bigham's leadership is evident in her role as the founding member and first president of SUSLA's Staff Senate, and her visionary initiative in establishing the dual enrollment program at SUSLA, significantly impacting the educational opportunities available to local students; and

WHEREAS, Sandra Bigham is an alumna of Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, LA, and Louisiana Tech in Ruston, LA, reflecting her strong academic foundation and commitment to lifelong learning; and

WHEREAS, Sandra Bigham is a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, exemplifying the sorority's principles of sisterhood, scholarship, and service; and

WHEREAS, Sandra Bigham will be honored at a retirement celebration on Sunday, June 9, 2024, from 4-7 pm at Uptown Bar & Lounge, where friends, family, and colleagues will gather to celebrate her numerous accomplishments and contributions;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, that Sandra Bigham is hereby recognized and appreciated for her outstanding service and dedication to Southern University at Shreveport and the broader Shreveport community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Commission extends its best wishes to Sandra Bigham for a fulfilling and joyful retirement, filled with continued success and happiness in all her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be delivered to Sandra Bigham as a token of the esteem in which she is held by the Caddo Parish Commission and the citizens of Caddo Parish.

**COMMUNIQES & COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- Mr. Epperson said that the Public Safety Committee met on Monday and discussed the Citizens Disaster Response Committee. He said that the number of appointments per Commissioner has been increased from two members to three members. He asked that those appointments be submitted by July 10, 2024. Mr. Epperson also announced that the Citizens Disaster Response Committee will meet on July 25 in the Commission Chambers at 1:00 PM. He would like Homeland Security, 911 Communications, and SWEPCO to be in attendance to this meeting.

The War on Litter has been extended to December of 2024, Mr. Epperson said. He asked that all elected officials discuss with their constituents the importance of picking up trash. Mr. Epperson also suggested that Shreveport Green be changed to "Caddo Green".

He then stated that the Veterans Affairs Committee met and talked about the Veteran

Friendly signs that are displayed on the welcome signs. Mr. Epperson then said that a plaque is being placed at the NWLA Veterans Cemetery and will have a press conference once it is constructed.

Mr. Epperson would also like the Veterans Affairs Committee to discuss a recommendation to the postal office for Col. dePyssler to be on the official stamp.

Mr. Epperson also said that July 2, 2024 was the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

He also announced that PRABA will be hosting a blood drive, fan donation, and back to school bash. Mr. Epperson encourage all to attend and volunteer if they are able.

- Mr. Cothran said that the Appropriations Committee met and reviewed all of the NGOs, so the Committee members are familiar with each and every NGO that the Commission is supporting.

He also thanked Administration and the City of Shreveport for all of the help with the Bradford Apartments in Southern Hills.

- Mr. Atkins wanted to know if the Citizens Disaster Committee met. Mr. Epperson said that they have not. He also asked the Clerk of the Commission to reach out to everyone on the list and remind them of the upcoming meeting.

- Mr. G. Young said that the Economic Development Committee met and discussed Pickleball. He asked that Mr. Patrick Wesley, Parks & Recreation Director, to come before the Commission and discuss the Pickleball program.

Mr. Wesley said that the Parks & Recreation Department introduced the Pickleball project to the Economic Development Committee, which consists of building a 19 court Pickleball facility. He said that this a fast-growing sport and would like to get ahead of the ball and bring it to Caddo Parish. Mr. G. Young said that the proposed site will be off of E. Preston, not far from the YMCA.

- Mr. Thomas reminded everyone to apply for Amazon, which will open July 5, 2024. He said that anyone who applies for the job will get the job pending a background check.

Mr. Thomas also gave the following announcements: Freedom Fest will be held on July 4 from 6:00 PM until 10:00 PM in downtown Shreveport; the Stoner Hill Reunion is scheduled for July 19-July 21; and the 2024 Pop-Up Shelter event will be held on July 26-July 27 from 10:00 AM until 4:00 PM at the Louisiana State Fairgrounds.

- Mr. Burrell said that the Queensborough Neighborhood Reunion will be held on July 6.

He also said that the Supreme Court ruled that the President of the United States has been given total immunity. Mr. Burrell said that this “essentially created a king of the United States”.

- Mr. Thomas said that he and Mrs. Blake attended the Strand Theater’s Opening for their 40<sup>th</sup> Season. He asked everyone to support them in this season.

- Mr. Epperson asked that Administration provide an update to the traffic cameras to the Commissioners.

### ***PRESIDENT’S REPORT***

Mrs. Gage-Watts encouraged everyone in Caddo Parish to apply for the jobs at the Amazon facility.

She also asked everyone to research the Constitutional Carry Act.

City Marshal Jefferson is hosting a gun safety initiative and invited everyone to attend.

Mrs. Gage-Watts said that the Juvenile Justice Committee met and discussed the public health, mental health, and gun crisis in Caddo Parish. There was also discussion regarding the Caddo Parish Youth Commission, composed of at least 50 youth. She asked the Clerk of the Commission to distribute this information to all of the Commissioners. There was also a GEMS presentation and looks forward to partnering with Ms. Huckabee to help the young women in the community.

Mrs. Gage-Watts also welcomed the Foster Family Reunion to Caddo Parish. She stated that the Fosters built some of the first homes in the Mooretown Community.

Mrs. Gage-Watts gave a shout out to her husband, Christopher L. Watts, for their 26<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary.

## **PUBLIC HEARING ON ZONING ORDINANCES**

Acting President Gage-Watts opened the public hearing on the following zoning ordinances:

- *Ordinance No. 6434 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 on the north side of East 70<sup>th</sup> Street, approximately 2,525' east of Bert Kouns Industrial Loop, Caddo Parish, LA from C-1, Neighborhood Commercial Zoning District, to C-3, General Commercial Zoning District, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

General Allan Rock came before the Commission to speak in favor of this ordinance and gave the following comment:

Thank you so much, Madam President. It's good to see you again and fellow Commissioners. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to come visit with you one more time. We had a chance to visit briefly about six weeks ago. So this proposal for you today is just simply changing the zoning from C-1 to C-3—it's already zoned commercial. The meets and bounds have already been turned in as well, so you have those as part of your record. There's a business there already, and I have a proposal to purchase a portion of that land that has not been developed yet. It's about 1.3 acres, but because of the levee that is on the back side of that—it really only gives me about a third of an acre to work with. But what we plan to do is to bring in new development and a new idea to the Shreveport/Bossier area, and it's called Scooter's Coffee. It started about 30 years ago in Omaha, Nebraska. It was a family-run business, and they have grown from a family-run business that now has 60 units just in Omaha. Six weeks ago, when I made this introduction to you, they had 780 units across the nation—they've opened 20 more units in the last six weeks. It is a fast-growing business. I have the rights to do two of them in the Shreveport area. There's already one breaking ground—it broke ground just last week in Bossier on Benton Road. There's another one proposed in North Shreveport off North Market. These are three separate groups that have these developments, but all with the same franchise. The last group have plans to open up five Scooters in the regional area here in some of the smaller communities. So, it's a company that you may not have heard of until May I introduced it to you about six weeks ago, but you're going to hear a lot about it here real soon because you're going to have multiple units in place. It's drive-thru only. They're known for just being fast and friendly. Their market is trying to reach commuters basically in the mornings; and it is all espresso-based drinks, hot and cold. Then there's some slushies. We've got some stuff for the kids. We've got some typical snack items—food items for, you know, for breakfast as well. Just a little bit about myself. I've been here in the local community for forty years. I showed up as an 18 year old. Barksdale was my first duty assignment as an Airman Basic, and I just retired this past year after forty years of service as a One Start. About half of my time has been on active duty; the other half of my time has been in the Reserve. I have two businesses that I've already established in the local community. I've had a financial services business for 35 years, and I've got a storage business in Benton. So, I'm an entrepreneur by heart when I knew I was going to change vocations, I needed to have something to do, and I love working with young people—love mentoring young people. This was a way to do it. I think I mentioned to you before, they do not market themselves this way, but I saw them as kind of the Chic-fil-A version of the coffee business. I'll just show you where you sit a couple of pictures of what they will look like when they're done. I'll just simply defer for some questions and discussion because I'm happy to discuss it with you. I will say that we did do a NPP on this back on May 1. Commissioner Young attended that. We had the residents that showed up—once they realize there was no access to the neighborhoods; no access to Dixie Garden; and there was no opposition. Commissioner Young was supportive as well.

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

## **PUBLIC HEARING ON ORDINANCES**

Acting President Gage-Watts opened the public hearing on the following ordinances:

- *Ordinance No. 6435 of 2024, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Riverboat Fund to provide an appropriation for Compassion for Lives, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6436 of 2024, an ordinance outlining procedures for displaying flags at Caddo Parish facilities, and otherwise providing with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6437 of 2024, an ordinance to amend and re-enact "Chapter 8—Animals & Fowl", of the Code of Ordinance of the Parish of Caddo, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6438 of 2024, an ordinance to close and abandon two portions of street dedications in the Bremer addition to Rodessa Subdivision, in Section 22, Township 23 North, Range 16 West, in the Parish of Caddo, and to otherwise*

*provide with respect thereto*

- *Ordinance No. 6439 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*

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

**ZONING ORDINANCES (for final passage)**

It was **moved by Mr. Atkins**, seconded by Mr. Lazarus, *that Ordinance No. 6434 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 on the north side of East 70th Street, approximately 2,525' east of Bert Kouns Industrial Loop, Caddo Parish, LA from C-1, Neighborhood Commercial Zoning District, to C-3, General Commercial Zoning District, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be adopted.

Mr. Atkins said that Mr. Young is in favor of this project. General Rock has been working hard to get community approval. He asked for the Commissioners' support on this project.

At this time, Mr. Atkins' motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Kracman, Lazarus, Thomas, and G. Young (11). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner J. Young (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

**ORDINANCE NO. 6434 OF 2024  
ZONING CASE 24-11-P**

BY THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION:

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 ON THE NORTH SIDE OF EAST 70TH STREET, APPROXIMATELY 2,525' EAST OF BERT KOUNS INDUSTRIAL LOOP, CADDO PARISH, LOUISIANA., FROM C-1 NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL ZONING DISTRICT TO C-3 GENERAL COMMERCIAL ZONING DISTRICT, AND TO OTHERWISE PROVIDE WITH RESPECT THERETO

BE IT ORDAINED by the Caddo Parish Commission in due, legal and regular session convened, that Volume II of the Code of Ordinances of the Parish of Caddo, as amended, the Caddo Parish Unified Development Code, is hereby amended and re-enacted to read as follows, to wit:

The official Zoning Map of the Shreveport Metropolitan Planning Area of Caddo Parish, Louisiana, be amended by rezoning property located on the north side of East 70th Street, approximately 2,525' East of Bert Kouns Industrial Loop, Caddo Parish, Louisiana, more particularly described below, be and the same is hereby amended **from C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zoning District to C-3 General Commercial Zoning District:**

A tract of land being a portion of Lot 1, Wardell Subdivision, as recorded in Book 6000, Page 185, Conveyance Records of Caddo Parish, Louisiana and being located in Section 21, Township 17 North, Range 13 West, Shreveport, Caddo Parish, Louisiana, being more particularly described as follows: Begin at the most northern front corner of Lot 1, Wardell Subdivision, as recorded in Book 6000, Page 185, Conveyance Records of Caddo Parish, Louisiana, being on the westerly right of way line of East 70th Street, thence South 44°08'54" West a distance of 164.73 feet, along said westerly line; Thence continue along said westerly line South 39°00'20" West a distance of 219.72 feet; Thence North 50°59'40" West a distance of 245.68 feet to the northwesterly line of said Lot 1; Thence North 67°30'51" East a distance of 443.99 feet to the most northerly corner of said Lot 1; Thence South 45°51'06" East a distance of 48.73 feet to the Point of Beginning. Said tract herein described containing 1.278 acre, more or less. Caddo Parish, Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that if any provision or item of this ordinance or the application thereof is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, items or applications which can be given effect without the invalid provisions, items or applications, and to this end, the provisions of

this ordinance are hereby declared severable.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that this ordinance shall become effective ten (10) days after publication in the official journal.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that all ordinances or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

**ORDINANCES (for final passage)**

It was **moved by Mr. Jones**, seconded by Mr. Cothran to take the following actions on the following ordinances:

- *Ordinance No. 6435 of 2024, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Riverboat Fund to provide an appropriation for Compassion for Lives, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be adopted
- *Ordinance No. 6436 of 2024, an ordinance outlining procedures for displaying flags at Caddo Parish facilities, and otherwise providing with respect thereto* be adopted
- *Ordinance No. 6437 of 2024, an ordinance to amend and re-enact “Chapter 8—Animals & Fowl”, of the Code of Ordinance of the Parish of Caddo, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be postponed for final passage and public hearing at the August 8, 2024 Regular Session
- *Ordinance No. 6438 of 2024, an ordinance to close and abandon two portions of street dedications in the Bremer addition to Rodessa Subdivision, in Section 22, Township 23 North, Range 16 West, in the Parish of Caddo, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be postponed for final passage and public hearing at the August 8, 2024 Regular Session
- *Ordinance No. 6439 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* be postponed for final passage and public hearing at the August 8, 2024 Regular Session

At this time, Mr. Jones’ motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Kracman, Lazarus, Thomas, and G. Young (11). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner J. Young (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

**ORDINANCE NO. 6435 OF 2024**

BY THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION:

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET OF ESTIMATED REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE RIVERBOAT FUND TO PROVIDE AN APPROPRIATION FOR COMPASSION FOR LIVES. AND TO OTHERWISE PROVIDE WITH RESPECT THERETO

WHEREAS, Compassion for Lives is an entity that focuses on reintegration for those incarcerated at Caddo Correctional Center; and

WHEREAS, Compassion for Lives offers services that lead to education, career readiness, mental health, financial literacy, and medication management to ex-offenders and individuals who may be experiencing barriers due to disadvantaged conditions; and

WHEREAS, Compassion for Lives was established in 2013; and

WHEREAS, the Appropriations Committee of the Caddo Parish Commission recommends providing a \$15,000 appropriation to the Compassion for Lives; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Caddo Parish Commission in due, legal and regular session convened, that Budget of Estimated Revenues and Expenditures for the Riverboat Fund for the year 2024 is hereby amended as follows:

<u>Riverboat Fund</u>	<u>Budget Increase (Decrease)</u>
Allocation to Other Entities	

NGO Appropriations	
Compassion for Lives	\$15,000
Fund Balance	(\$15,000)

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that if any provision or item of this ordinance or the application thereof is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, items or applications which can be given effect without the invalid provisions, items or applications, and to this end the provisions of this ordinance are hereby declared severable.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that this ordinance shall take effect upon adoption.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that all ordinances or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

**ORDINANCE NO. 6436 OF 2024**

BY THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION:

AN ORDINANCE OUTLINING PROCEDURES FOR DISPLAYING FLAGS AT CADDO PARISH FACILITIES, AND OTHERWISE PROVIDING WITH RESPECT THERETO.

WHEREAS, The Caddo Parish Commission believes that the flag of the United States is a symbol of unity, the values of our nation, the ideals embedded in our Constitution and represents the rights protected Parish wide; and

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission believes that the Louisiana State Flag and Caddo Parish flags further symbolize the values and that Prisoners of War and those Missing in Action should be honored.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Caddo Parish Commission in due, legal and regular session convened that the Caddo Parish Commission amends Chapter Two, Article I of the Caddo Parish Code of Ordinances to add the following:

**CHAPTER 2-ADMINISTRATION ARTICLE I.-IN GENERAL**

**Sec. 2-6.-Display of Flags at Caddo Parish Facilities**

- (a.) Caddo Parish shall maintain a United States and Louisiana flag, flag staff and the necessary appliances for its display upon, in or near every Parish and administrative building where a flag staff or display appliances can be installed.
- (b.) The only flags to be permanently displayed outside or inside of wholly own Caddo Parish properties are the United States Flag, the Louisiana State Flag, the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action flag and the Caddo Parish Flag.
- (c.) These flags shall be flown at full or half-staff pursuant to law.
- (d.) When a flag is in such a condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem of display, it shall be retired through donation to an appropriate scouting, civic, military or veteran’s organization or should be destroyed in a dignified way in accordance with US Flag Code.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that this ordinance is effective ten days after its final passage.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that all ordinances or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

**ORDINANCES (for introduction by title)**

- *Ordinance No. 6440 of 2024, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Oil & Gas Fund to appropriate funds for VYJ*
- *Ordinance No. 6441 of 2024, an ordinance to amend and re-enact Section 2-209 et seq of Article VI of the Code of Ordinances relative to the Caddo Parish Living Wage, and otherwise providing with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6442 of 2024, an ordinance to accept the streets in North Club West Unit No. 2 into the Parish of Caddo Road System, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

## WORK SESSION MINUTES

It was **moved by Mrs. Gage-Watts**, seconded by Mr. Burrell, *that the Work Session Minutes from July 3, 2024 be ratified.* Motion carried.

## RESOLUTIONS

It was **moved by Mr. Epperson**, seconded by Mr. Burrell, *that Resolution No. 46 of 2024, a resolution opposing Louisiana Act No. 676 of the 2024 Regular Legislative Session, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto be adopted.*

Mr. Epperson said that the Constitution does not mention God, Jesus, or Christianity, and contains the word "religion" twice. His reason for opposing this legislation is that the veterans of this country swore to protect the Constitution of the United States for all Americans, regardless of whom they choose to worship. He said that the veterans of our military are of various religious beliefs. He feels that this resolution is divisive and will create chaos. He asked that this resolution be sent to the Governor, State Legislature, Caddo School Board, City Council, etc. and asked that the Commissioners join him in support of opposing this act.

Mr. G. Young agreed with Mr. Epperson and feels that anyone should have the rights to believe however they want to believe, but does not feel that anyone has the right to impose their beliefs on anyone else. He pointed out that the First Amendment says that Congress should make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. He said that America was not built upon religion, and most people came to this country for economic reasons. Mr. G. Young feels that this act is divisive.

Mr. Burrell pointed out that the Ten Commandments was not given to the Christians, but to the Jews.

Mr. Kracman said that nothing about this law is creating a new religion. The Ten Commandments is a document of laws that has historical value in the establishment of this country and the basis of the United States Constitution. Mr. Kracman further stated that this resolution has items that do not pertain to the law that was passed. He also said that this act was written, reviewed, debated, and passed on a bipartisan vote. Mr. Kracman pointed out that this law has already passed.

Mrs. Blake said that this is an important subject because these principles are the basis of the foundation of the structure of the United States. For some, it is a moral guide; for some, it is historical construction; and for some, it is both, she said. Mrs. Blake wanted it to be on the record that she is in support of the State of Louisiana, Governor Landry, and those who had the courage to come forward to put the Ten Commandments back into the schools. She said that this is not about forcing personal religious beliefs on any person, but the facts of this country.

Mr. Jones said that he is a proud believer and follower of Jesus Christ. His issue is that "we like to pick and choose when we want to use religion". He gave examples of closing down crawfish, not eating catfish, etc. He said that the Commission should not take the burden off the parents to do the job that they're supposed to do with regards to a child's moral compass. Mr. Jones said that he is a pastor, but he did not run as a pastor. He pointed out that there he has Muslim constituents in his district, and many other people who do not practice Christianity. There's a separation of church and state, he said.

Mr. Lazarus pointed out that this law already passed with bipartisan support, and this proposed resolution simply objects to that law. It has no effect, nor will it change the law, he said. Mr. Lazarus also said that the Ten Commandments is displayed at the Supreme Court. If its good enough to be in our Supreme Court; It is good enough to be in our schools, he said.

Mr. Thomas wanted to know what an educator is supposed to do when a child asks about adultery and sex. He said that this law puts an undue burden on the educators.

**Call for the Question by Mr. Cothran**, seconded by Mr. Atkins. Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Kracman, Lazarus, Thomas, and G. Young (10). NAYS: Commissioner Burrell (1). ABSENT: Commissioner J. Young (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

At this time, Mr. Epperson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Thomas, and G. Young (7). NAYS: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Kracman, and Lazarus (4). ABSENT: Commissioner J. Young (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

## RESOLUTION NO. 46 OF 2024

BY THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION:

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING LOUISIANA ACT NO. 676 OF THE 2024

REGULAR LEGISLATIVE SESSION, AND TO OTHERWISE PROVIDE WITH RESPECT THERETO

WHEREAS, Act No. 676 requiring posters of the Ten Commandments to be displayed in every public school classroom became effective June 19, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the First Amendment to the United States Constitution states in pertinent part: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press"; and

WHEREAS, Act No. 676 clearly indicates a preference for Christianity to the exclusion of other religions that may be practiced by Caddo Parish Citizens.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission in due, legal and regular session convened that the Caddo Parish Commission hereby opposes Act. No. 676 of the 2024 Louisiana regular legislative session.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution is effective immediately upon its passage.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution will be forwarded to the Speaker of the Louisiana House, the President of the Louisiana Senate, the Caddo Parish legislative delegation, Governor Jeff Landry, the Caddo Parish School Board, the Shreveport City Council, and any entities filing lawsuits to challenge Act. No. 676.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all resolutions or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

**NEW BUSINESS**

It was **moved by Mr. Epperson**, seconded by Mr. Thomas, *to discuss the Commission's participation in the Governor's Conference on Juvenile Justice.*

The Clerk of the Commission explained that this event will be held locally, but would like some formal direction on this conference.

Mrs. Gage-Watts said that the conference will be held on August 21-August 23 at the Shreveport Convention Center. She would like all of the Juvenile Justice Committee members to attend this conference.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know if the Governor will be in attendance. Mrs. Gage-Watts is not sure.

Mr. Epperson wanted to know if a motion was necessary. Mrs. Gage-Watts said that it was not.


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- Mr. Burrell said just because the Legislature passed something with bipartisan support does not make it right. He also said that beliefs shouldn't be "pushed down your throat" because the majority does it. Mr. Burrell said that the public schools is not a government, and is comprised of many races, colors, ethnicities, and many people of different religious beliefs.
- Mr. Epperson said that people deserve the right to worship freely and not impose it on anyone else. He suggested making World Religion an elective during school to study the different religions of the world.
- Mr. Thomas wished Mr. Lester Clark a Happy 100 Year Birthday.
- Mr. G. Young encouraged everyone to read some books on history and read the Bible. School is about education, not beliefs, he said.
- Mr. Cothran asked about cameras regarding litter dumping in his district. Mrs. Bryant said that they are working with Shreveport Police to see if the Commission is able to install the cameras. She also pointed out that the issue is with monitoring the cameras.
- Mr. Kracman said that the resolution is already law.
- Mrs. Blake said that the Ten Commandments is a historical matter and is based on the Founding Fathers' beliefs, and it was used to create laws. She reiterated that this was a bipartisan vote of support in the Legislature.

- Mr. Atkins thanked everyone in the audience for their patience as the Commission body worked through these issues.
- Mr. Thomas said that the United Constitution was founded so that anyone could practice whatever religion they choose. He said that elected officials have the responsibility to respect all religions and faiths.
- Mrs. Gage-Watts agreed and said that it is not anyone's right to impose laws on people with regards to religion.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

  
Michelle Nations  
Assistant to the Commission Clerk

  
John-Paul Young  
President