

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
OF THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION
HELD ON THE 1st DAY OF AUGUST, 2022

The Caddo Parish Commission met in a Work Session, on the above date, at 3:30 p.m., in the Government Chambers, with Mr. Atkins, presiding, and the following members in attendance constituting a quorum: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Chavez, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (11). ABSENT: Commissioner Epperson (1).

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

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Breeka Peoples came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

Commissioners, how you all doing today? My name is Breka Peoples. I'm the founder of the People's Promise and, also, the Louisiana State Action. I'm coming to you all today to support Resolution 37, sponsored by Steven Jackson. The past two months the electric bill has been doubled, almost tripled than normal. The citizens in Caddo are being charged double for federal costs. Our elders are on a fixed income and can't afford this bill. So, I'm requesting you all to support Steven Jackson's Resolution 37 and try to come up with a plan with SWEPCO for the future. Because we fighting. we can- we probably can't. We can't afford this high bill. It's higher than a mortgage. You seen you all electric bill? I saw my electric bill is higher. I know you all's is to. So make sure y'all support this resolution. Thank you all.

Sabbath came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

I called the Commission's Office and asked for explanation about my electricity. I've been in the same home for twenty years. My high bill in summer months two-fifty. It is now five-fifty. I was told that SWEPCO is charging us for the fuel-the cost of fuel that they have to pay. They're giving it to the customers. So, they say that this matter was voted on. So, I don't know who it benefits, but it didn't benefit the customers. My mother in law's on a fixed income. She cannot afford to pay for her electricity bill. She lives across the street from me. Now, her bill is five-fifty She's only bringing home eight-something. She's retired. So, something is wrong. SWEPCO is extorting the customers. I'm being charged for electricity that we are not using. This is criminal. Thank you.

VISITORS

- SWEPCO Representatives

Mr. Michael Corbin, External Affairs Manager, SWEPCO, came before the Commission regarding expensive electric bills. He understands that bills are more expensive than normal. He said that SWEPCO is regulated off the Public Service Commission, and their fuel charges are passed down directly to the customer. There's no markup; we make no profit off fuel charge, he said. Mr. Corbin further explained that the main reason for the electric bills being so expensive is due to the price of natural gas. He said that there is some relief in site because gas prices are starting to trend down.

Mr. Corbin also explained that there are some ways to help the customers. He encouraged everyone to sign up for average monthly billing, so there aren't "huge spikes" during the summer months, as well as, other payment programs. He also talked about weatherization programs for homeowners, appliance rebates, and smart thermostat rebates. They are also adding more renewables, such as solar power and wind power. He said that wind and solar do not have a fuel charge associated with them.

Mr. Corbin also talked about suspending disconnects, so the customers can catch up on their bills. He said that puts people more behind because those customers never catch up. Mr. Corbin also mentioned that during heat advisory days or extreme cold days, they are not allowed to do disconnects.

Mrs. Gage-Watts wanted to know if it has to be consecutive heat advisory days for service to be disconnected. Mr. Corbin said that if the excessive heat is expected to come back, then they are not going to do disconnects. He said that they do not want to do disconnects.

Mr. Burrell wanted to know how disconnects are determined. Mr. Corbin said that it is longer than a few days, more like a few months. He reiterated that they work with the customer to avoid disconnect.

Mr. Burrell wanted to know if SWEPCO has any influence on pricing of natural gas. Mr. Corbin explained that they can try to negotiate, but ultimately, they have to pay whatever the current price is.

Mr. Burrell then wanted to know about the maintenance of trees. Mr. Corbin said that they have an annual budget for tree trimming, as well as, addressing emergency situations.

Mr. Jones wanted to know the timeframe before a disconnect is done. Mr. Corbin said that it would be about two to three months of disconnect due to non-payment.

Mr. Jones then talked about the areas where wind energy is provided. Mr. Corbin said that there are windmills that provides power in Louisiana and Arkansas right now.

Mr. Jackson clarified that there are no standard operating procedures on disconnects. He continued and said that there are issues with people not being able to pay their bills. Mr. Jackson would like “everyone to be on the same page and not necessarily have a sort of *laisse faire* approach to this”. Mr. Corbin understands, but they are not doing disconnects during this extreme heat. He reiterated that they do not want to do disconnects.

Mr. Jackson wanted to know if the persons who have been disconnected are responsible for reconnection fees and late fees. Mr. Corbin said that they are at this time, but they work with each customer as closely as they can.

Mr. Chavez requested that Mr. Corbin provide more information to the Commissioners regarding the average monthly billing option. He also asked that music or other information be placed on the “on hold” call. Mr. Corbin acknowledged Mr. Chavez’s request and said that the customers do have an option to leave a number for SWEPCO to call them back.

Mr. Chavez asked about the Public Service Commission. Mr. Corbin explained that Mr. Foster Campbell is the local Public Service Commission. He said that there are five Commissioners across the State, and they have monthly meetings. Mr. Corbin further explained that if there are new generations being added, it would need to be approved by the Public Service Commission.

Mr. Chavez talked about the wind farm in Oklahoma. Mr. Corbin explained that when the wind farm is paid off, the rider goes away. There will be no fuel charges for any energy that is brought into the system by the wind farm.

Mr. Taliaferro wanted to know if utility increased during the last moratorium. Mr. Corbin said that during COVID, there were so many people at home.

Mr. Taliaferro clarified that the moratorium does not free the customer of the debt. Mr. Corbin agreed. Mr. Taliaferro said that a moratorium would be “saddling our citizens with more debt”.

Mr. Burrell asked about the construction. Mr. Corbin said that they do ongoing improvement work as part of their business plan.

Mr. Jackson said that a person from Southwood Village was disconnected this past week while the temperatures were 103 degrees. He further explained that the resolution on the agenda is not utility payment forgiveness, and the customer is still responsible for their bills, but to work something out to where the citizens are being disconnected during extreme heat. Mr. Corbin reiterated that they are not doing disconnects right now.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

- *Juvenile Detention*

Dr. Wilson said that there are twenty-two children in the Detention Center; seven of which are OJJ. There are ten 17-year olds, and eight children at CCC.

- *Doorbell Camera Program*

Dr. Wilson said that installations will be August 5th, and is being administered by the Caddo Council on Aging.

- *Wheelchair Ramp & Roof Repair Program*

Dr. Wilson said that this program will begin on August 8th, and is also being administered by the Caddo Council on Aging.

- *NGO Training Sessions*

Dr. Wilson explained that there have three training sessions thus far, with a makeup session on August 8th.

- *Caddo Annual Finance Report (fiscal year ending December 31, 2021)*

Dr. Wilson stated that there are copies of the report placed at each Commissioner's station. He reported that there were no findings.

- **COVID**

Dr. Wilson also mentioned that there were nineteen exposures within the Caddo Parish Commission organization. He also said that there have been seven positive cases within the thirteen agencies in Caddo Parish.

- **Commissioners Request to Administration**

Mr. Jackson asked that a Monkey Pox update also be added to the Administrator's Report.

MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Mr. Stephen Jean said that they are working to restart the Master Plan Committee. He does not have a proposed timeline on when that will happen.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Atkins thanked Mrs. Barnett and the Finance Department for all of their hard work.

NEW BUSINESS

It was **moved by Mr. Johnson**, seconded by Mr. Jackson, *that Zoning Case Appeal 22-3-BAP, located at 5247 Norfolk Road in Caddo Parish* be moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction.

Mr. Johnson explained that the neighbors in this area have signed a petition against the construction of this building.

Mr. Jean said that according to the Code, there cannot be an accessory structure in the front yard, so the variance would need to be granted in order to move forward with the construction. He said that the residents of the cul-de-sac were worried that they would be seeing a large structure in their front yards. After hearing all of this evidence, the Parish Planning & Zoning Commission voted to deny the variance.

Mr. Young said that the neighbors were concerned that there would be a large structure too close to their property boundaries. Mr. Jean said that was correct and does not believe that the structure would obscure their view of the lake. Mr. Jean believes that the neighbors would like the building on a different part of the property, not in the front yard. He further explained that the other locations of the property would be prone to flooding. Mr. Young wanted to know if the property owner would be willing to build something smaller.

At this time, Mr. Johnson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Chavez, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (11). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Epperson (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Hopkins**, seconded by Mr. Jackson, *that Ordinance No. 6247 of 2022, an ordinance amending the Budgets of Estimated Revenues and Expenditures for the Building Maintenance Fund, Capital Improvement Fund, General Fund, Oil and Gas Fund, Public Works Fund, Detention Facilities Fund, Criminal Justice Facilities Fund, Health Tax Fund and the Riverboat Fund, for the year 2022 to terminate completed or lapsed capital projects, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction.

Mrs. Barnett said that every year they review capital projects and lapsed projects and return those funds back to the funding source.

Mr. Burrell asked for a comprehensive list of the projects. Mrs. Barnett said that there is an attachment on the agenda that lists the projects.

Mr. Jackson wanted to know if the funds go back to the Capital Outlay Fund. Mrs. Barnett explained that the funds would go back to their funding sources.

At this time, Mr. Hopkins' motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Chavez, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Lazarus, and Taliaferro (10). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioners Epperson and Young (2). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mrs. Gage-Watts**, seconded by Mr. Johnson, *that Ordinance No. 6248 of 2022, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues and Expenditures for the Oil and Gas Fund for the year 2022 to provide an appropriation for relocation assistance and to otherwise provide*

with respect thereto be moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction.

Mrs. Gage-Watts said that the Commission has assistance in the past to avoid homelessness. She further explained that this ordinance is to relocate the citizens to a habitable environment. This will not correct the problem across the board, but this will give a lot of assistance, she said.

Mr. Burrell wanted to know if there was a comprehensive list of relocation projects.

Mrs. Verni Howard, Providence House, said that this legislation is different from what the City of Shreveport is doing. She said that they vet the residents to determine whether they are in the Parish, deposits, etc. She also said that the Caddo Parish Commission is doing up to 80% of the average median income with a maximum payout at \$1,200, and can only be used for certain things, such as first month's deposit, moving truck, etc.

Mrs. Howard also pointed out that Providence House get Rapid Rehousing and Homelessness Prevention funding from the City.

Mr. Jackson pointed out that Providence House was a community for the ERAP program. He then asked Mrs. Howard to provide more information regarding ESG. Mrs. Howard explained that ESG is an acronym for Emergency Solutions Grant, and is funding that comes through the City of Shreveport via the federal government. Rapid Rehousing means that a person is on the verge of homelessness. Instead of that person coming to the Providence House or shelter, Providence House will use ESG funds to pay that person's rent until they can get on their feet. She said that they can do rental assistance and utility assistance, but will not pay past due fees. Mrs. Howard also explained that Providence House provide long term solutions for people to not become homeless. Mr. Jackson agreed and said that the Commission is proposing legislation to provide funding for people to be relocated to safe and sanitary conditions. He pointed out that safe means having utilities.

Mrs. Howard mentioned that there is a waitlist of about sixty people.

Mr. Johnson asked to be added as a sponsor to the ordinance.

Mr. Chavez wanted to know the total amount for relocation assistance. Mrs. Bryant said that it is up to \$36,000.

Mr. Chavez then wanted to know if this would have to follow the revised NGO guidelines. Mrs. Bryant said that this was not treated like an NGO because Administration is asking Providence House to administer this program.

Mr. Burrell suggested coming up with a solution to pay late fees for the citizens.

Mr. Taliaferro wanted to know what happens to the property owners who rent the deplorable living conditions to people. Mrs. Howard said that she can only speak to the accountability for the people they help. She said that those people are responsible for looking for jobs where they can earn a living wage, the children are in school and have school supplies, etc. She said that they provide a "hand up, not a handout" to people. Mr. Taliaferro understands, but would like those property owners to be held responsible.

Mr. Jackson wanted to know if there has been a graduation at Providence House. Mrs. Howard said that they've recently had a kid's graduation. Mr. Jackson wanted to know if they do a "red door". Mrs. Howard said that they do, and explained that the red door is a tour of the facility. Mr. Jackson encouraged anyone to tour the facility.

Mrs. Howard also mentioned that they just constructed a state-of-the-art calming center for the children who are traumatized from homelessness.

Mr. Young wanted to know if Providence House reports substandard housing to any authority. Mrs. Howard said that they report it to Child Services if they find a child in that house.

Mr. Burrell asked to become a co-sponsor to this piece of legislation.

Mrs. Gage-Watts mentioned that the Housing Authority, Louisiana Housing Commission, and Louisiana HUD has been notified and will be investigated.

At this time, Mrs. Gage-Watts' motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Chavez, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (11). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Epperson (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Chavez**, seconded by Mr. Atkins, *that Ordinance No. 6249 of 2022, ordinance amending the 2022 Budget of Estimated Revenues and Expenditures for the Capital Outlay and Oil and Gas Funds and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for

introduction.

Mr. Chavez said that this funding is for the construction of a Ronald McDonald House over the course of three years. He explained that the Ronald McDonald House is for families whose children are ill. The House provides a place for the family to stay while their child is going through treatment.

Substitute motion by Mr. Burrell, seconded by Mr. Johnson, *that Ordinance No. 6249 of 2022* be remanded back to the Economic Development Committee.

Mr. Johnson said that the Shriner's Hospital is here now, and families stay here in hotels with assistance while their children are receiving treatment. He also wanted to know if it was primed to assist one hospital or all of the hospitals in the area. Mr. Johnson also stated that this is age restricted as well. He mentioned that the families may have some issues with transportation. He suggested that this go back to committee to be further vetted.

Mr. Johnson also mentioned that he is not in favor of funding a project over several years.

Mrs. Janelle Mason, CEO Ronald McDonald House, said that the House provides a home away from home for children who are receiving treatments in a hospital. She also mentioned that the Ronald McDonald House also provide a community, meals, and everything that is needed so the parents can focus on their child. She also said that they serve children up to the age of 21.

She further stated that they are in the feasibility phase.

Mr. Chavez added that the location is behind the Wendy's on Bert Kouns near the WK-NICU.

Mr. Chavez wanted to know if there was a time restraint for this project. Mrs. Bryant said that the organization is trying to get a feel of how much money they can raise in the community.

Substitute motion by Mr. Hopkins, seconded by Mr. Chavez, *that Ordinance No. 6249 of 2022 be introduced to Thursday's Regular Session and schedule an Economic Development Committee on Monday, August 15, 2022.*

Mr. Jackson said that there is "a lot of privilege being exercised". He also said that he asked about minority contracting, but it is not reflected in ordinance. He also asked about MOUs and didn't know that a location has been decided already. He pointed out that there are three pediatric facilities in this community. Mr. Jackson said this is "too loose" right now, but believes that the community will benefit from this type of project. He said that there are concerns with the items that he discussed are not reflected in the ordinance. Mr. Jackson would like these things to be "memorialized in the ordinance".

Mr. Jackson wanted to know if any other public bodies have been asked. Mrs. Mason said that she is in conversations with the City of Shreveport. He also said that he was not aware of an August deadline. He would like there to be consistency to what has been done in the past with large capital projects.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know if this funding would be for 2022 or 2023. Mrs. Bryant said that it would be 2022, 2023, and 2024. Mr. Johnson then wanted to know if an application has been submitted. Mrs. Bryant said that this is considered a capital project funded from the Oil & Gas Fund.

She also pointed out that the procedures that were just revised are for the 2023 applications.

Mr. Atkins wants to ensure moving forward on a process that will be used for a capital project, NGO application, economic development, etc.

Mr. Atkins also pointed out that an Economic Development Committee was called with an agenda posted.

Mrs. Gage-Watts said that she is in full support of this venture, but feels that this needs to go back to committee to be further vetted.

Mr. Jackson said that he is going to propose his amendments and would like to be reflected in the ordinance.

Mrs. Gage-Watts pointed out that the title would not be changed, so amendments could be made.

At this time, Mr. Hopkins' motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Chavez, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson, Jones, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and

Young (10). NAYS: Commissioner Johnson (1). ABSENT: Commissioner Epperson (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Lazarus**, seconded by Mr. Hopkins, *that Ordinance No. 6250 of 2022, an ordinance to close and abandon a portion of the dedication for an unnamed road in the Parish of Caddo, and otherwise providing with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction.

Mr. Lazarus said that the property recently changed hands and all of the interested parties have signed off.

At this time, Mr. Lazarus' motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Chavez, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (11). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Epperson (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Jackson**, seconded by Mr. Burrell, *that Resolution No. 37 of 2022, a resolution urging and requesting Southwestern Electric Power Company, American Electric Power Company, Inc., and Panola-Harrison Electric Cooperative to establish a moratorium on disconnection or shutoff of utility service to individuals, and otherwise providing with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration.

Mr. Jackson asked for support on this resolution for consistency across the board.

At this time, Mr. Jackson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Burrell, Chavez, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Lazarus, and Young (9). NAYS: Commissioners Atkins and Taliaferro (2). ABSENT: Commissioner Epperson (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Johnson**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *that Special Resolution Of Remembrance & Respect Bishop Fred Caldwell, Sr.* be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration. Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Chavez, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (11). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Epperson (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Johnson**, seconded by Mr. Lazarus, *to consider the recommendations of the Property Standards Committee regarding the following cases: 9562 Wallace Lake Road (District 9) and 5136 Old Mooringsport Rd (District 2)* be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration.

Substitute motion by Mr. Jackson, seconded by Mr. Johnson, *to englobo and move the following items to Thursday's agenda for consideration:*

- *to consider the recommendations of the Property Standards Committee regarding the following cases: 9562 Wallace Lake Road (District 9) and 5136 Old Mooringsport Rd (District 2)*
- *Appointment Of Manjit Singh To Broadband Committee*

At this time, Mr. Jackson's substitute motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (10). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioners Chavez and Epperson (2). ABSTAIN: None (0).

COMMUNIQES AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Mr. Jackson said that there is a growing concern with TNR cats. He wanted to know who is responsible for the damages made by the cat. Mr. Kelvin Samuel said that a community cat cannot be considered at-large or a stray. He said that the community cat is a TNR cat and its first round of rabies. He said that the community cat caregiver cannot be held reliable for the cat. If it becomes a nuisance, then it will need to be placed inside with its owner. He also mentioned that orange peels, coffee grinds, etc. can be put down to deter cats. Mr. Samuel understands that nobody polices the cat community. Mr. Jackson would like to revisit this in committee.

Mr. Jackson would also like to schedule two redistricting sessions.

- Mr. Jones announced that Taking It to the Streets will be out tomorrow from 5:30 to 7:30 at Morning Star Baptist Church.

- Dr. Wilson congratulated Mrs. Barnett and her team for all of their hard work to ensure no audit findings on the financial report.

- Mr. Atkins apologized for "getting ahead of the game" with regards to the Ronald

McDonald House project.

- Mr. Burrell talked about Broadband. He said that he would like to schedule a committee meeting to discuss the Gumbo Grant.

Mr. Burrell asked if Administration could provide an update on orphaned wells.

- Mr. Chavez called an Economic Development Committee meeting on Thursday at 1:30 p.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

- *Zoning Case 22-1-CTAP, regarding Ordinance No. 6244 of 2022, an ordinance to amend Volume II of the Code of Ordinances of the Parish of Caddo, as amended, the Caddo Parish Unified Development Code, to extend the notification area for mailed notices, to establish the provisions for the Neighborhood Participation Plan, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto.*
- *Zoning Case No. 22-11-P, regarding Ordinance No. 6245 of 2022, 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 north side of North Lakeshore Drive at the intersection of Fairlane Circle, Caddo Parish, LA., from R-1-7 Single-Family Residential Zoning District to R-A Rural-Agricultural Zoning District, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6246 of 2022, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues and Expenditures for the Riverboat Fund for the year 2022 to provide an additional appropriation for Robinson's Rescue 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 5:54 p.m.


Assistant Commission Clerk