

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
OF THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION
HELD ON THE 18th DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2023

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

The invocation and Pledge of Allegiance were given during the Appropriations Committee, so the Commission moved onto Citizens Comments.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

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

Good evening, Commissioners. I want to say—uh, my name is Jon Glover—I want to tell you that! I thought it worth me making a statement before I start addressing the issues that came before you all. When I come before you all requesting or even asking for an explanation of an agenda item, it is not an attack. It is just me wanting to get some information. So, if you perceive it as an attack that is never my intent nor purpose. Now, onto the business at hand. I picked up this card in the foyer and many know that we're about to consider this. As I went through it, I thought—neighborhood development programs. That's something the City of Shreveport normally takes care of. So, I'm not understanding why you all are stepping into that one. Then, the litter and blight abatement—Shreveport Green, you all give them a grant through the grant situation—NGOs. Then, I thought about workforce development. That's done through NLEP. You know, you got things on here that really has nothing to do with the Parish; it has to do with other entities. So, my intent and purpose would be to ask you, no matter that this card is out there because you're still wanting people to vote on it—you need to be clear about why you put those items in this particular millage. Number two, I was reading an agenda item that talked about a veteran's cemetery sign. And I thought, 'I've gone to the Veterans Cemetery quite a few times, and I've been able to get there with the signs that are already displayed'. So, I need to know where is this sign going to be? Because I've not had any concerns getting to the Veterans Cemetery. But, then I went to the funding of this signs, and it talked about the Oil & Gas Fund. Now, a lot of people don't like the oil and gas revenues, but then they want to use those oil and gas revenues—can't have it both ways. Either you're for it, or you're against it; it can't be both. I do appreciate you all allowing me to speak, but there was one other thing, Sickle Cell. It talked about doing probably a comparison study to see if those disabilities are weighted according to—I mean, I guess compensation. You're saying that Sickle Cell gets so much money. Those recipients that are Sickle Cell, and that there must be a chart or a scale that determines how much a person with Sickle Cell gets. Now, I did some research, and I could not find anything that said this is how disability compensations are afforded to those recipients. So, I'd like to know how that came about too. Thank you.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

- *Juvenile Detention*

Mrs. Bryant said that there are twenty juveniles in the Detention Center, five of which are OJJ. There are four 17 years olds, and nineteen at CCC. There are 621 juveniles on probation.

- *Region IV Police Jury Association Meeting
September 27, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.*

Mrs. Bryant announced that the PJAL Region IV meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 27, 2023 beginning at 6:00 p.m. The meeting will be at the Petroleum Club.

- *August 2023 Financial Report*

Mrs. Bryant provided the Commissioners with a copy of the August 2023 Financial Reports, which is also attached to the agenda.

- *I-49 Public Meeting
October 17, 2023 from 3:30 p.m. -6:30 p.m.*

Mrs. Bryant said that NLCOG will be hosting an I-49 public meeting on October 17th from 3:30 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. at the Shreveport Convention Center. This meeting will provide the different alternatives routes for the I-49 connector.

COMMISSION REMARKS

- Mr. Epperson requested that Administration reach out to Dr. Martha Whyte with regards to COVID and the booster. He also expressed concerns with patients being overcharged for COVID tests at Ochsner's.

Mr. Epperson also pointed out that the ordinance regarding the Veterans sign should read “commemorative plaque”. He explained that the Caddo Parish Commission was the first to have a Veterans Cemetery in the State of Louisiana, which led to the construction of four others in the State.

- Mr. Chavez requested clarification on the juvenile justice cards that the citizen spoke about during Citizens Comments. He asked that an explanation for these items be provided during Thursday’s Regular Session. Mrs. Bryant explained that the millage is a criminal justice millage and public safety initiative, not just juvenile justice.

- Mr. Young explained that the items on criminal justice push cards are a contributing factor to the criminality in the City—the lack of jobs, the lack of people who have skills that are productive, etc. He said that everyone does a little bit, “but it is not enough”. He further explained that there is a high unemployment rate because those people do not have skills. Mr. Young said that people are making money on the streets rather which contributes to the crime in the city. Mr. Young said that it is his “hope that people will realize that public safety is worth an investment and that crime costs us all”.

- Mr. Johnson said that the items on the criminal justice millage all contribute to a cleaner city and less crime.

Mr. Johnson then asked for an update on the gardens at the courthouse. Mrs. Bryant said that the summer has been a hot and dry summer, but it is on their to-do list.

Mr. Johnson then asked about the \$75k that was given to SPD regarding the Cooper Road mass shooting. Mrs. Bryant said that it is in line with the other CEAs, and they are trying to figure out how to coordinate that particular CEA. Mr. Johnson mentioned that this CEA is time sensitive. Mrs. Bryant understood and said that this is the one of the reasons the criminal justice millage is important.

- Mr. Atkins wanted to address the comment made during Citizens Comments with regards to the hypocrisy of voting for spending oil and gas monies and regulating noise. Mr. Atkins said that he is for oil and gas, but wants to ensure that it is done safely. He would like to find a balance between the industry and the citizens.

- Mrs. Gage-Watts wanted to address the questions regarding Sickle Cell. She said that it is an underrepresented disease. Mrs. Gage-Watts said that a person with MS receives six times the amount that a person with Sickle Cell does.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Burrell said that the City of Shreveport, Vivian, Blanchard, and other municipalities are still a part of the Parish. The programs that are listed on the criminal justice millage card would help with crime in the City and Parish, and it should be inclusive.

NEW BUSINESS

It was **moved by Mr. Epperson**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *that Ordinance No. 6355 of 2023, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Oil & Gas Fund in the amount of \$12,000 to provide an appropriation for the Veteran Cemetery Sign and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday’s agenda for introduction.

Mr. Epperson would like it to be a commemorative plaque, not a sign leading to the Veterans Cemetery. He asked for the Commission’s support on this ordinance.

Mr. Chavez wanted to know if this needs to be re-advertised due to the changing of the word sign to commemorative plaque. Attorney Bernstein said that it would be a commemorative plaque sign. Mrs. Bryant said that this commemorative plaque would be housed at the cemetery and citizens could read the history of how the cemetery came about.

Mr. Atkins said that his only concerns are that he feels that the cemetery is to honor the veterans, not this body per se. Mr. Epperson said that this is the history of how that cemetery came about.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know the dollar amount that was funded to the Caddo Common Park. Mrs. Bryant stated that the Commission funded \$1M to the park. He said that the Commission “paid \$1M for a plaque in the ground for 1.4 acres, and this is only \$12k. I’m just comparing apples with apples”.

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

It was **moved by Mr. Johnson**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *to englobo and advance the following items to Thursday’s Regular Session:*

- *Ordinance No. 6356 of 2023, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Building Maintenance Fund, Capital Improvement Fund I, Capital Improvement Fund II, Oil & Gas Fund, Public Works Fund, Detention Facilities Fund, and the Capital Outlay Fund for the year 2023 to terminate completed or lapsed capital projects, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Resolution No. 48 of 2023, a resolution urging and requesting the State of Louisiana to review disparities of Sickle Cell Disease disability compensation compare to other diseases and otherwise providing with respect thereto*
- *Special Resolution recognizing National Association of Gospel Radio President Charles Johnson*
- *Special Resolution recognizing Brady Blade's 70th Preaching Anniversary*
- *Special Resolution proclaiming September as NICU Awareness Month*
- *Special Resolution recognizing Dr. Majed Jeroudi*

Mrs. Gage-Watts said that she would like to be added to the Special Resolutions.

Mr. Hopkins wanted to know the details of the Citizens Disaster Committee. Mr. Epperson said that this committee would allow citizens to see SWEPCO, the Office of Homeland Security, rural Fire Districts, Caddo 911 Center, etc. He said that the citizens need to be involved more. Mr. Burrell mentioned that this does not replace the first responders.

Mr. Jackson talked about the Citizens Disaster Committee. He wanted to reiterate that the advisory committees are in an advisory capacity, but at the end of the day, it is up to the Commission to make the final decision. I don't want the lines blurred, he said. Mr. Burrell agreed.

At this time, Mr. Johnson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Burrell, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Lazarus, and Young (10). NAYS: Commissioner Chavez (1). ABSENT: Commissioner Jones (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Hopkins**, seconded by Mr. Jackson, *that Special Resolution for the Daughters of the American Revolution* be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration.

Mr. Hopkins explained that this special resolution is to recognize Constitution Week and the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Mr. Jackson wanted to know if this has to do with the Civil War. Mr. Hopkins said that it does not. He explained that this is the American Revolution, not the Civil War.

Mr. Johnson said that this special resolution states 'preserving American history'. He said that it is to the reader's interpretation on how that is meant. He also mentioned that this is the same group of people who were against moving the Confederate Monument. Mr. Hopkins corrected him and stated that was the Daughters of the Confederacy, not the Daughters of the American Revolution.

At this time, Mr. Hopkins' motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Burrell, Chavez, Hopkins, Jones, Lazarus, and Young (8). NAYS: Commissioners Epperson, Gage-Watts, and Johnson (3). ABSENT: Commissioner Jones (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Johnson**, seconded by Mr. Jackson, *that Fred White, Rickey Hall, Kyle McInnis, Archer Frierson, and Zazell Dudley be considered for reappointment to the Industrial Development Board, terms to expire August 22, 2029* during Thursday's Regular Session.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know if additional people could be appointed during Thursday's Regular Session. The Clerk of the Commission pointed out that there is a requirement for a resume.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know if these current members are interested in being reappointed. The Clerk of the Commission explained that the attorney for the board reached out and said that they are all interested in being reappointed. Mr. Atkins would like to remind the Commissioners that these board members have served on the board for at least four years and have gained institutional knowledge.

Mr. Epperson would like these members to reach out the Commissioners and state that they are interested.

Mr. Burrell wanted to know at what point does the Commission appoint new members. Mr. Epperson said that they serve at the Commission's pleasure.

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

It was **moved by Mr. Jackson**, seconded by Mr. Johnson, *that the selection of the Fiscal Agent Bank for November 1, 2023 until October 31, 2025 for the Parish of Caddo* be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration.

Mr. Jackson would like to see the CRA for each of these banks. Mrs. Bryant pointed out that there was a recommendation from the Finance Committee to keep Origin Bank as its Fiscal Agent.

Mr. Johnson requested that a representative from Origin Bank be in attendance for Thursday's meeting.

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

It was **moved by Mr. Hopkins**, seconded by Mr. Jackson, *that the authorization of changing the scope of Fire District No. 8 ARPA project from SCBA air pack bottle replacement to the purchase of a sprint truck* be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration.

Mr. Hopkins said that the SCBA bottles can now be refurbished and certified, so they don't expire as quickly. Fire District No. 8 would like to change the scope to the purchase of a sprint truck for their "non-big" emergencies.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know if they are using fiberglass or steel bottles. Mr. Hopkins was not sure. Mr. Johnson then asked if it would cost more for the purchase of the sprint truck. Mr. Hopkins stated that the cost would be almost the same.

Mr. Epperson explained that SCBA stood for Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus.

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

COMMUNIQES AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Mr. Jackson wanted to know the impact of the juveniles being moved from Angola. He asked for an update before next meeting. Mr. Randall agreed.

He then asked Mr. Samuel about the nutria rats' issue. Mr. Samuel explained that the person they use has to be state certified before he can continue his work in eradicating the nutrias.

Mr. Jackson then talked about Ford Street. Mr. Ward explained that they are still looking for funding, but they have the DOTD permit in place. He also said that they are finalizing their engineering and water plans.

- Mrs. Gage-Watts invited everyone to wear red during Thursday's Regular Session in honor of Sickle Cell Awareness Month. She requested that the courthouse be lit up red on Saturday, September 23, 2023.

- Mr. Hopkins asked about the horses. Mr. Samuel said that they remove two of the horses, but there are still a few more horses. They are giving the owner a chance to give the horses their Coggins and have their teeth floated.

- Mr. Burrell said that he's had complaints on Hearne Avenue around Willis-Knighton. Mr. Ward said that he will reach out to DOTD to see if there are any plans with that road.

He also asked about the dogs on Alabama and Stonewall. Mr. Samuel said that they are going to set another trap to get the loose dogs. Mr. Burrell then asked about the darts. Mr. Samuel said that the darts are the last resort for roaming dogs.

- Mr. Young said that there is a pack of five to eight wild dogs running around Spring Lake. He understands that CPAS has apprehended a couple of them. It is also his understanding that these dogs have killed several cats, and people are worried about their children. He would like to explore the possibility of using the tranquilizer darts on the remaining dogs at-large.

- Mr. Epperson announced that the new OMV on Raspberry Lane is under construction. Mr. Epperson also announced that Joey Strickland will be the Grand Marshal in this year's Veterans Parade & Honor Ceremony. He invited everyone to attend the event.

Mr. Epperson pointed out that Erin Buchanan is back with LADOTD for anyone who has any issues with roads.

CONSENT AGENDA

- *Ordinance No. 6345 of 2023, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Oil & Gas Fund to provide air conditioning to Caddo citizens and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6348 of 2023, 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 northwest corner of Wells Island Road and Mallot Drive, Caddo Parish, Louisiana, from R-1-7 Single Family Residential Zoning District to I-2 Heavy Industrial Zoning District, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6354 of 2023, in regards to PZC Zoning Case 23-25-P, 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 east side of Devereaux Road approximately seven hundred ninety-six feet north of Pinehill Road, Caddo Parish, LA, from R-1-7, Single Family Residential District to R-TH, Townhouse Residential District, 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 4:48 p.m.


Assistant to the Commission Clerk