

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S  
NGO APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
HELD ON THE 21st DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2023

The Caddo Parish NGO Appropriations Committee met in legal session on the above date, at 3:00 p.m., in the Government Plaza Chambers, with Mrs. Gage-Watts, Chairman, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson and Jones (6). ABSENT: None (0).

Mr. Jackson gave the invocation, and Mr. Atkins led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

There were no agenda additions nor public comments, so the Committee moved onto New Business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- *Discuss and make recommendations regarding the 2024 NGO funding requests*

Mrs. Gage-Watts asked about the spreadsheet that was presented to the Committee members. She said that she does not have enough time to look over the spreadsheet.

Answering a question from Mrs. Gage-Watts on who presented the spreadsheet, Mr. Burrell stated that he did. He said that he analyzed the information that was gathered, as well as, the percentages of the applications. Mr. Burrell also pointed out that the Chairperson's recommendations are still listed on the spreadsheet in Column D.

Mrs. Gage-Watts pointed out that the Economic Development Committee just adopted the Chairperson's recommendations. She also said that as a courtesy, she allowed Mr. Burrell to review the recommendations, but "it has nothing to do with his authority as the president". Mrs. Gage-Watts said that the scores and percentages were already on the original spreadsheet.

Mr. Burrell said "this is supposed to be a committee process, not one where you only get a recommendation from the chairman".

Mrs. Gage-Watts stated that the Commission voted on a standardized process a few years ago, so there would be no political motives on selections moving forward. Each committee member has the opportunity to score the evaluations for their individual input.

Mr. Jackson wanted to know if there was an administrative recommendation. Mrs. Barnett said that Administration's score was a part of the percentage.

He then wanted to know the variances between Columns D and E on the spreadsheet. Mr. Jackson pointed out that both columns came out with the same bottom dollar. He wanted to know what could be done to get the Chairperson and the President to come to a resolution.

It was **moved by Mr. Jones**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *to recommend to the full body the Chairperson's recommendations for NGO funding.*

Mr. Jones wanted to know how the allocations amounts came about. He asked if it was put through a scoring matrix. Mrs. Bryant agreed and for the most part the funding amounts stayed the same or decreased, and very few organizations' funding amounts were increased. Mr. Jones wants to ensure that the process is streamlined with the policies that were put in place.

**Substitute motion by Mr. Hopkins**, seconded by Mr. Burrell, *to recommend to the full body the President's recommendations (Column E) for NGO funding.*

Mr. Hopkins pointed out that the bottom line for both recommendations is the same, but the distribution of funds between the organizations vary slightly.

Mr. Johnson explained that a formula should have been used to determine the allocation amount for each organization. He suggested that the Committee go through each organization and determine what the funding amounts are for each.

Answering a question from Mr. Johnson regarding the budget amount for NGO, Mrs. Barnett said that the amount is \$600,000.

**Amendment by Mr. Jackson**, seconded by Mr. Jones, *to accept the Chair's recommendations regarding NGO funding, except increase ICE to \$25k.*

Mr. Burrell stated that this is not about the ICE program.

At this time, Mr. Jackson withdrew his amendment.

Mr. Burrell explained that his spreadsheet is due to there not “being a rhyme or reason” to the proposed allocated amounts. He explained that the amounts he suggested were from a formula based on the percentages, with the exception of new NGOs. Those NGOs, because they are new, receive \$5,000.

At this time, Mr. Jones withdrew his original motion.

Mr. Jones said that there is more confusion and he feels “rushed” in this process. He said that there might be more discussion, and he is not comfortable with the spreadsheet as is.

It was **moved by Mrs. Gage-Watts**, seconded by Mr. Jackson, *to accept the Chair’s recommendation regarding NGO funding.*

Mrs. Gage-Watts said that all of the committee members had an opportunity to review the organizations and the dollar amounts. She also expressed concerns about another committee with a smaller amount of organizations. She would like these numbers to move forward, so this can be sent to the printer.

Mr. Jones reiterated that he came to the meeting prepared to accept the recommendations from the Chairperson, but this new piece of information raises a few questions and he would like to vet it further.

Mrs. Gage-Watts pointed out that there were \$4M in requests, but they had to reduce that amount tremendously.

The Clerk of the Commission restated the motions that were on the floor.

At this time, Mrs. Gage-Watts’ motion failed, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Gage-Watts and Jones (2). NAYS: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Hopkins, and Jackson (4). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

At this time, Mr. Hopkins’ substitute motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Hopkins, and Jackson (4). NAYS: Commissioners Gage-Watts and Jones (2). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

Mr. Jackson wanted to know what would have happened if both motions failed. Mrs. Bryant stated that the Chairperson’s recommendations would have been forwarded to the full body based on the last meeting’s motion.

Mrs. Gage-Watts expressed her disappointment in today’s decisions.

At this time, there was no further discussion to come before the Committee, so the meeting adjourned at 3:43 p.m.

  
Assistant to the Commission Clerk