

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S  
JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMITTEE  
HELD ON THE 20th DAY OF JUNE, 2024

The Caddo Parish Juvenile Justice Committee met in legal session on the above date at 2:00 p.m., in the Government Plaza Chambers Conference Room, with Mrs. Gage-Watts, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Blake, Cothran, Gage-Watts, Jones, Thomas, and J. Young (6). ABSENT: None (0).

Mr. Jones gave the invocation, and Mrs. Blake led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

There were no Agenda Additions or Public Comments, so the Committee moved onto New Business. **Just a note, the majority of this audio is garbled, so some of the conversation might not be included in these minutes. The meeting is available via Zoom.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

- *Presentation from Kelli Todd, Executive Director of the Harbor*

Mrs. Todd introduced herself to the Committee. She provided a summary of the Harbor. She said the facility houses several non-profits as a one stop shop for people in need of services. They are trying to find ways to keep kids off the street, especially during the summer and on weekends. VJY is also planning a backpack giveaway, but they will also be informing the kids and their parents about the mental health services that are available to them.

Mrs. Todd also said that there are other needs for the Harbor. They surveyed several families and children. The main thing that this children are into are making videos, creating content, etc. She suggested that a recording studio/influencing room be constructed at the Harbor. It would be manned by the music students at LSU, Centenary, and Southern. Mrs. Todd also said that there are several children who need mentors, but the parents are not bringing them there. She said that mentor initiatives would be helpful. They would also like to expand the food bank because the families are complaining not being able to receive cold/frozen foods. There is also a concern with children and parents spreading untreated STDs in the community. LSU would like to partner with the Harbor and become the first site do provide self-testing kits. She said that a person could come in grab a test, take the test at home, mail it off, then get the results. If they do test positive, they will provide services. She said that these kits could be passed out during community events. The total cost for her request is about \$38k. This would cover the recording/influencing studio, expansion of the food bank, and the STD self-testing kits.

Mrs. Gage-Watts thanked Mrs. Todd for all of her hard work she provides to the families and children of this community. She wanted to know how many youth are registered for the art course. Mrs. Todd said there are twenty-four students who have pre-registered, and these are at-risk children.

Mrs. Gage-Watts is concerned about the youth who have not crossed the threshold of being at-risk. She also wanted to know if there have been any discussions with the Caddo Health Unit about the self-test kits. Mrs. Todd said no, but they have talked to Dr. Martha Whyte. Mrs. Gage-Watts then asked Mrs. Todd to expound on the mentor initiatives. Mrs. Todd said that it could be as simple as gift cards, an opportunity to get more food from the food bank, etc. Mrs. Gage-Watts loves the conversation about the recording studio. She said that this definitely applies to the youth nowadays due to social media. Mr. Jones knows a young man who can collaborate with VYJ for this studio.

Mr. Jones wanted to know if VYJ still has the Facts of Life program. Mrs. Todd said that the turnout was so bad that they discontinued it.

Mrs. Blake wanted to know the three mental health organizations that are housed at the Harbor. Mrs. Todd said that they are Center for Children & Families, Brighter Futures, and Choices. Mrs. Todd further explained that Choices is the local wrap around Medicaid. They only see the probation children. Center for Children & Families does 0-18 years old. Brighter Futures does everyone. Mrs. Blake is excited about the recording studio/influencing center. She said that there is so much local talent and would love to involved the youth.

Mr. Cothran wanted to know if there were other activities for the youth to participate in that isn't art camp. Mrs. Todd said that they have projects, camps, and courses throughout the year for the youth.

Mrs. Gage-Watts pointed out that there is a contract with Uber and Lyft to provide transportation for these families.

It was **moved by Mr. J. Young**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *to recommend to the full body an appropriation of \$38k to VYJ from the Oil & Gas Fund.*

Mr. J. Young said that the Harbor is set up with several services for the children and their families, and it is all in one place. His motion is cheaper than building another jail cell for a juvenile. This is a great way to start kids on an extracurricular path that is not done recklessly or using drugs, he said.

Mr. Jones talked about vaping among young people. Mrs. Todd said that they have partnered with Willis Knighton, who provides informational session regarding the side effects of vaping. Mr. Jones would like to be proactive and try preventative services for vapes.

Mrs. Gage-Watts mentioned that there are other NGOs that have submitted applications after the deadline. Keep the same energy for other organizations, she said.

**Substitute motion by Mr. Cothran**, seconded by Mr. Cothran, *that this be forwarded to the NGO Committee.*

Mrs. Blake wanted to know if VYJ partners with the military. Mrs. Todd said that 15-18 of their mentors have come straight from Barksdale. She also said that they could strengthen those relationships.

Mr. J. Young understands that this is an NGO and that the deadline passed, but this could be a tool for long-term crime prevention in our area.

There was a suggestion that Mr. Cothran's substitute motion be a friendly amendment with the stipulation that the NGO Committee meet on either July 1 or July 3 to discuss this initiative. Mr. J. Young agreed.

The Clerk restated the motion on the floor as *to recommend to the full body an appropriation of \$38k to VYJ from the Oil & Gas Fund, and to also remand this request to the NGO Committee for discussion with the meeting scheduled for July 1 or July 3. This motion carried unanimously.*

- *Discussion of No Loitering Signage and other matters related to loitering, trespassing, vacancy, etc.*

Chief Smith said that there were several young people coming out on Sunday afternoons and cruising the parks. He further explained that people were coming from Texas, Mississippi, and Arkansas to experience the Sunday Afternoon Cruise. As a result of this, people were cutting donuts in the streets, drag racing, and hanging out of the cars. This is very dangerous, he said. Law enforcement officers (LEOs) were limited in what they could do on private property. Chief Smith had discussions with the city attorney and city judges who drafted an affidavit that has to be renewed by the property manager or business owner every year. This affidavit allows SPD to act on their property in their absence asking persons to leave; and if they do not leave, SPD could remove them on their behalf. He is requesting that this sign be placed at the entrance of the building. This program is at no cost to the Shreveport Business Department. He said that the North Shreveport Business Association will provide the signs for \$30 a piece.

Mrs. Gage-Watts thanked Chief Smith for his presentation.

Mrs. Blake wanted to know how many people are in this program. Chief Smith said that hundreds of people are part of this program. She requested that this information be put in digital and print form to pass out to businesses.

It was **moved by Mrs. Gage-Watts**, Mr. Jones, *to recommend to the full body an appropriation of \$5k to supply the first 100 businesses with the signs. Motion carried unanimously.*

- *Discuss business relative to juvenile services*

Mr. Andrew Randall, Director of Juvenile Services, provided an update on the different services and program they are working on for the youth.

Mr. J. Young suggested that they should send as many children in the Juvenile Detention Center to the Harbor.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

  
Michelle Nations  
Assistant to the Commission Clerk