

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 14TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2024

The Caddo Parish Economic Development Committee met in legal session on the above date at 12:30 p.m., in the conference room of Government Plaza Chambers, with Mr. Greg Young, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cothran, Gage-Watts, Jones, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (8). ABSENT: None (0).

Mr. Thomas gave the invocation, and Mr. Cothran led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

There were no Agenda Additions nor any Public Comments, so the Committee moved New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Discussion of an ordinance to require that companies contracting with Caddo Parish Commission provide a living wage to employees*

Mr. G Young began the conversation by mentioning he would like to continue to be an economic development leader in the community by requiring companies who contract with the Parish to provide a living wage to their employees. The last meeting briefly discussed the impact this could have on the contractors and Parish Administration. He also pointed out that an ordinance was recently passed by the Caddo Parish Commission requiring a livable wage of at least \$15 per hour to Parish employees beginning in 2025.

This meeting is to discuss the requirement of companies to provide a living wage of at least \$15 per hour to their employees if they contract with the Parish. There would be an exemption of those companies who have fifteen or less employees. He also asked Administration develop a verification and certification process for compliance.

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mr. Jones, *to recommend to the full body an ordinance to require that companies contracting with the Caddo Parish Commission provide a living wage of \$15 per hour, with an exemption for companies who have 15 employees or less; and to have Administration develop a verification and certification compliance process beginning January 1, 2025.*

Mr. Thomas said that there was discussion about potentially meeting with the contractors. Mr. G. Young clarified that he charged the Public Work Director and the Facilities & Maintenance Director to survey the contractors based on this proposal.

Mr. Atkins opposed the motion for several reasons, such as raising the costs for all businesses that the Parish conducts which will trickle down to the taxpayers, increase the burden on Administration, and it is government overreach. Mr. Atkins further stated that he is in support of paying the Parish employees a minimum wage of \$15 per hour, but is opposed to imposing the Parish's views on other businesses.

Mr. G. Young mentioned that a zero minimum wage determined by the marketplace is used in the following states: Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, and South Carolina. He also said that none of these states are flourishing economically. Mr. G. Young does understand that businesses have the right to pay their employees according to the federally mandated \$7.25. Mr. G. Young also mentioned that if businesses want to work with us, we should be able to have input. He also feels that certain communities differ in disparity and should be treated justly and fair.

Mr. Cothran is concerned about the effective date and how that is going to affect the contracts with adjustments in pay. He wanted to know if the contractors would have an opportunity to renegotiate their contracts. Mrs. Bryant said that if this ordinance were to pass, then this would be for new contracts, not ones that are already in place. Mr. G. Young said that he is not in support of breaking contracts. Mrs. Bryant reiterated that they would honor the contracts they already have in place, or they could be subject to lawsuits.

Mrs. Bryant also wanted to know what type of contracts would this affect. Mr. G. Young said that they are not talking about products; they are talking about services.

Mr. Weaver, Director of Public Works advised that their contractors are paid over \$15 per hour. He is concerned with tracking the information. Mrs. Bryant said that Administration is concerned that this could potentially result in additional costs to the Parish. She also mentioned that this type of information may not be able to be put in the bids. Additional costs could come about with a new requirement in the bids.

Substitute motion by Mr. Jones, seconded by Mr. Cothran, *that this discussion be postponed until the November 4th Economic Development Committee meeting, and the ordinance be introduced during the November 21 Regular Session.*

Mr. Jones suggested that the discussion regarding this ordinance be postponed until all

ramifications are in place. He agreed with paying people employees living wages, but would like to have all the legality issues answered before voting on this item.

Mr. G. Young said that this is not the first time this issue has been brought up. He feels that there has been plenty of time for this process to be vetted. He is in disappointed that the Commission is not doing more to save the little guy.

Mr. Jones said that the legal processes need to happen first. He wants everyone to have a livable wage, but on the flip side, he does not want small businesses to feel the burden of having to pay people more, then not surviving. Mr. Jones does not know of any janitorial place that pays \$15 an hour. The business owner has a family to feed as well, Mr. Jones said.

Attorney Frazier asked for a deadline to submit to this committee her findings.

Mr. Cothran agreed that everyone needs a livable wage, but Legal has to go through the process.

At this time, Mr. Jones' substitute motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cothran, Jones, Thomas, and G. Young (6). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioners Gage-Watts and J. Young (2). ABSTAIN: None (0).

- *Continued discussion and recommendations regarding the creation of a Caddo Film & Entertainment Advisory Board*

Mr. G. Young said that this discussion is to establish a Caddo Film & Entertainment Advisory Board to be initially staffed by five members of the Caddo Economic Development Committee. They will initiate, sponsor, and develop the board holding one-year terms. After those terms expire, the board will be reconstructed for non-Commissioner members. The advisory board will identify and establish entertainment and film interests to include any forms of such that the advisory board deems appropriate for family centered and culturally oriented amusement.

Mr. Burrell wanted to know if this was for films made locally. Mr. G. Young said that this would be determined by the advisory board. He said that the resolution that is being put forward is the skeleton for the board.

It was **moved by Mr. Cothran**, seconded by Mr. Thomas, *to recommend to the full body a resolution establishing the Film & Entertainment Advisory Board.*

Mr. Cothran said that his motion to strictly stand up the board without putting forth any funds.

Mrs. Gage-Watts wanted to know what Mr. G. Young envisions what the board and its charge would look like. Mr. G. Young has given a great deal of thought regarding this board. He envisioned hosting a quarterly show highlighting the local talent. He said that this would stimulate interests in the Parish. Mr. G. Young would like Caddo Parish/Shreveport to be the epicenter of the film and entertainment industry. Opportunities are here, and devices and concepts need to be put in place to highlight the framework to bring us closer together, Mr. G. Young expressed. Mrs. Gage-Watts concurred with Mr. G. Young's vision. She does believe that there are valuable resources here in Caddo Parish.

Mr. Burrell would like to hear from the Shreveport-Bossier Tourism Bureau. Mrs. Stacy Brown said that there was a Shreveport-Bossier Film Industry section within the Tourism Bureau. As things slowed down, the Film person left. She introduced Mr. Wade Marshall to the Committee. Mrs. Brown said that with 50 Cent's arrival in the area has re-sparked the interest in the Shreveport-Bossier film industry. Mrs. Brown said that they have since hired Mr. Marshall as the Executive Director of the Shreveport-Bossier Film & Entertainment Commission.

The website needs to be updated, as well as locations, vendors, etc. Mr. Marshall wants to revamp the current needs and make sure that things are readily available for the film industry.

There was also discussion regarding the Governor's proposal to do away with the Film Tax Credits for Louisiana. Mrs. Brown said that this could be detrimental to the State's film industry.

Mr. Wade mentioned how he worked for Millennium Studios under the Shreveport Economic development. He also had a part in running the Independence Stadium. He wants permits to be readily available and wants to promote different spaces around town, including nightlife, to keep the industry growing.

Mr. Wade said that the film industry takes young people and puts them in an industry that leads to high paying careers.

Mr. Burrell said that the Commission may need to gear up and pushback against the Governor's proposal. Mr. Wade suggested that a packet be created stating the positives of the Film & Entertainment Industry. He said that this is billions of dollars of economic impact to the State.

Mr. Jones wanted to know if this was one of the legislative priorities. Mrs. Bryant said that it can be. Mr. Jones said that this is an economic opportunity for the Parish. Be the master of one trade, instead of the jack of all, he said.

Mr. J. Young wanted to know if there was an economic impact study regarding the impact of the Film & Entertainment Industry to this Parish. Mrs. Brown said that she can get those numbers together.

Mrs. Bryant pointed out that there are multiple bills being proposed, and Administration is reviewing all of those bills to determine how they could impact the Parish.

Mrs. Brown said that Texas just passed several Film Tax Credits because they were losing monies. Mrs. Bryant said that Texas does not have income tax, but they do have tax credits.

Mr. Thomas supports sending a resolution to encourage the continuation of film tax credits. Mr. Cothran agreed with this.

At this time, Mr. Cothran's motion carried unanimously.

It was **moved by Mrs. Gage-Watts**, seconded by Mr. Thomas, *to recommend to the full body a resolution to encourage the continuation of Film Tax Credits.* Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Burrell, Cothran, Gage-Watts, Jones, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (7). NAYS: Commissioner Atkins (1). ABSENT: (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

Mr. G. Young also mentioned that he would like to have his committee meetings in the conference room going forward.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.



Ashlyn King
Office Specialist



Michelle Nations
Assistant to the Commission Clerk