

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S  
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE  
HELD ON THE 9<sup>th</sup> DAY OF OCTOBER, 2024

The Caddo Parish Charter Review Committee met in legal session on the above date at 2:00 p.m. in the Government Plaza Chambers Conference Room, with Dr. Jimmy Jones, Chair, presiding. The following members were present constituting a quorum: Versa Clark, Steven Coleman, Curtis Joseph, Mavis Thigpen, Attorney Donna Frazier, and Assistant Parish Administrator Clay Walker (6). ABSENT: Mike Johnson, Dr. Jimmy Jones, and Caddo President John Paul Young (3).

The invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance were given by the Charter Review Committee members. There were no Agenda Additions nor any Public Comments, so the Committee moved onto New Business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- *Discussion of Charter Article III and IV*

Attorney Frazier asked if any committee members had any questions regarding the previously discussed sections. There were no questions or concerns brought up by the Committee. The Clerk of the Commission explained that the Commission's By-Laws mimic Section 3-07 of the Charter.

A committee member raised a question regarding Section 3-07 B about penalties or the absence of a member for emergency meetings. Attorney Frazier advised that the President of the Commission is the one who calls special meetings or emergency meetings. She explained that business cannot happen during a meeting if a quorum is not met. Attorney Frazier also said that the regular sessions are adopted by resolution at the end of each year, and calendar invites are sent out to Commission members and staff. According to the By-laws if a quorum cannot be reached, the Sheriff may look for a member and serve a fine of no more than \$10.

The Committee moved onto Section 3-07 H with regards to the Commission President. Attorney Frazier explained that the President of the Commission serves for ceremonial purposes only and has no administrative duties. She did have concerns with this language with regards to the Office of Homeland Security, but they have since added a clause that a Police Jury President/Commission President could handle those issues.

There were no questions on Section 3-08 with regards to Investigations, so the Committee moved onto Section 3-09 regarding Independent Audits. Attorney Frazier explained that this audit can be performed by private auditors or by the Legislative Auditor and is done annually. The Commission has elected that this be done by private auditors. The findings are submitted to the Commission. Federal funds are included in the audit as well.

The Committee moved onto Section 3-10 with regards to the Commission Clerk. The Commission is given the right to appoint the Clerk and outline the clerk's duties. The Administrator, Commission Clerk, and Parish Attorney have twelve bosses (The Commission). The Commission Clerk advised he and his employees are not officially acknowledged in the Charter or By-laws. He further explained that the duties of the Commission Clerk's Office are not detailed anywhere. Attorney Frazier asked for suggestions.

One member asked if it would be feasible for the Administration and the Commission Clerk's Office to come together. Attorney Frazier advised that entities need to be separate because they are separate branches. It takes a two-thirds vote to remove the Administrator, but that does not apply for the Commission Clerk. General employment law would go into place for the Commission Clerk. A committee member suggested that the "majority" be replaced with "two-thirds" vote. Mr. Walker said that the Parish Administrator is part of the executive branch, whereas the Commission Clerk is part of the Legislative Branch. He further explained that the Parish Administrator is not meant to do what the Commissioners ask, but is meant to do what is appropriate for the executive branch of government. The Commission Clerk serves as an employee to the Caddo Parish Commission. The committee members suggested leaving the language as is.

The Committee moved onto Section 3-11 regarding ordinances. Attorney Frazier explained the difference between ordinances and resolutions. Resolutions are expressions of the will of the Commission, whereas ordinances are the actual laws that have to be followed. Seven favorable votes are needed to adopt either ordinances or resolutions.

The Committee moved onto Section 3-12. Attorney Frazier spoke on the form of an ordinance, active status, and publication. She said that the Commission is subject to the State's Open Meetings Law. The Clerk of the Commission said that the Commission is stricter with regards to publishing in the Official Journal than state requirements. The Commission advertises weekly as opposed to daily. It was suggested to do online posting, but it was voted down. The ordinance becomes effective after 10 days after publication.

Attorney Frazier spoke on emergency ordinances mentioned in Section 3-13; these affect life, health, property or public safety and usually help in situations of natural disaster. The emergency can

be extended 30 days, but not any longer. Attorney Frazier also explained that usually the Commission will adopt another ordinance so that the appropriations can remain and still be used beyond the 30-day emergency period.

The Committee moved onto Section 3-14 with regards to building codes. Attorney Frazier said that after Hurricane Katrina, the State required the adoption of a building code. The Commission adopted the State's building code.

The Committee moved onto Section 3-15 regarding the authentication and recording of resolutions and ordinances. The Commission Clerk is required to authenticate, record, and distribute resolutions and ordinances. A file is required to be kept at the Clerk's Office and the Commission Clerk's Office. The codification of ordinances is also mentioned in this section.

Attorney Frazier talked about Section 3-16 regarding the power to levying taxes. A committee member asked if the Commission has to get authority from the State Legislature prior to levying a tax. Attorney Frazier said that the State Constitution gives political subdivisions the authority to levy certain taxes, as long as they are taken to the voters in accordance with the Constitution.

Section 3-17 speaks on the power of enforcement, which gives the Commission the power to enforce any law they create, with the exception of criminal laws which are enforced by the Sheriff.

Since there was no more discussion with Article III, the Commission moved onto Article IV—Parish Administrator.

The Parish Administrator is appointed majority vote by the Commission and can be removed by a two-thirds vote. The Parish Administrator is solely appointed based on the executive and administrative qualifications, experience, and training assigned to them by this Charter. This clause is an attempt to de-politicize the appointment process. There is also, in detail, the process of removal and how the Administrator may appeal their termination.

The Clerk of the Commission suggested making the Charter gender-neutral.

The process of appointing an Acting Administrator is explained in Section 4-04. This would be in case the Parish Administrator could not perform their duties.

Section 4-05 speaks on the power and duties of the Parish Administrator. They sign contracts, deals with employees, directing and supervising the administration, reports to the Commission, provide and establish a system of internal audits, etc. It was noted that each department is audited every two to three years to make sure the departments are complying with policies, procedures, and best practices. The Administrator makes budget recommendations to the Commission.

The Clerk of the Commission wanted to know if the new departments should be mentioned in the Charter. Attorney Frazier said that the Charter allows the reorganizations of departments via ordinance. She suggested not putting those departments in the Charter because there would be another four years before it could be taken out or amended.

There was discussion regarding the Parish Attorney's Office. The Parish Attorney is appointed by the Administrator with a confirmation by the Commission. The Attorney is different because there is an attorney-client relationship.

Section 5-08 speak on positions of classified and unclassified positions. Employment laws still come into play before dismissal. Attorney Frazier also mentioned Section 5-10 gives the Parish Administrator the authority of reorganizing departments. This would need to be submitted via ordinance. If the Commission does not act on this within 60 days, then the submission will become effective.

- *Next Meeting Goals*

Attorney Frazier suggested that the Committee discuss Article VI—Financial Procedures at the next committee meeting. She would like Mrs. Bryant to be present since she was the CFO for several years and could provide institutional knowledge on these processes.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.



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