

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 23rd 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 the following members were present constituting a quorum: Versa Clark, Steven Coleman, Mike Johnson, Curtis Joseph, Attorney Donna Frazier, and Parish Administrator Erica Bryant (6). ABSENT: Dr. Jimmy Jones, Mavis Thigpen, 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 VI*

Attorney Frazier explained that Article VI deals primarily with the financial procedures with regards to the Budget.

Mrs. Bryant said that the Budget process typically begins in July. The Parish is responsible for providing operating costs for a number of agencies, including the First Judicial District Court, District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Office, Coroner, and Juvenile Court. Departments and agencies are contacted for their budgetary requests. The Budget is then presented to the Commission before November 1. During this meeting, the Commission sets the public hearing and adoption date for the Budget.

Administration encourages the citizens to participate in the public hearing. The budget approval process involves multiple departments. Changes within the budget can be made internally as long as the total budget remains the same. For significant changes exceeding 15%, the budget must be presented to the Commission for approval via an ordinance.

Attorney Frazier said that there is also a Capital Improvement Budget, and those appropriations are good for five years. The other appropriations in the budget are only good for one year.

After the summary given, Attorney Frazier asked if there were any questions from the committee members.

A committee member raised a question regarding federal funding and its impact on the budget. Mrs. Bryant explained that if there are federal dollars for a specific fund, the budget would still need to be adopted in the same manner in accordance with the Charter, even if it is federal funds. She gave examples of Head Start, Section 8, etc.

Mrs. Bryant explained that bonded debt is debt that the citizens have voted to allow the Parish to issue debt and pay for that debt through a millage. This debt is specific to what the citizens voted on.

Another question was raised if there needs to be a specific list in the Charter regarding what agencies the Parish funds. Attorney Frazier said that this was discussed in Article V. Mrs. Bryant pointed out that Fleet Services was deleted as a department, and Communications and Information Systems were added as departments.

A committee member asked about state roads. Mrs. Bryant explained that the Parish contracts out the projects for Parish roads. She said that the State might use the same contractors as the Parish, but the State's list is extensive. Attorney Frazier also said that the Parish does not want to pick up the responsibility for state roads because with responsibility comes liability.

Attorney Frazier pointed out Section 6-9, expenditures by Commissioners are prohibited. The Charter prohibits expending funds per district.

Administration prepares, presents, and oversees the budget process to ensure it aligns with the Commission priorities as a whole. The old Police Jury system allowed individuals juror to advocate for projects in their districts; whereas the Commissioners have to vote on projects. The Commission operates as a legislative body, ensuring that decisions are made collectively, rather than by individual Commissioners. Attorney Frazier pointed out that typically, there are studies done and data collected prior to approving projects.

At this time, the Committee moved onto Article VII—Initiative, Referendum, Recall, and Removal by Suit. This provides a mechanism for citizens to lobby the Commission to pass certain ordinances or appeal certain ordinances. A certain percentage of the voters has to initiate this process. It would need to be advertised with public hearings. If it is passed or repealed, it cannot change for a year, then it will operate as a regular ordinance. This has not happened during Attorney Frazier's tenure.

Attorney Frazier also talked about recalling a sitting Commissioner. She explained that any

Commissioner may be removed from office by the electors of the affected district through a recall process, and is the same as state law. This is the same for removal by suit.

There being no additional questions, the Committee moved onto Article VIII—General Provisions. Attorney Frazier said that this is a procedural article. This talks about how to serve the Parish; the Code of Ethics; amending/appealing the Charter; etc.

Attorney Frazier also said that if this Committee makes recommendations to amending the Charter, those recommendations would need to need to be presented to the full body. The Commission would then vote on those recommendations on whether or not they should go to the citizens for a vote.

Attorney Frazier also pointed out that Article VIII talks about boards and commissions. The members of these boards or commissions are not to be compensated and serve at the pleasure of the Commission. All meetings are subject to the State's Public Meetings Laws.

There being no additional questions, the Committee moved onto Article IX—Transitional Provisions. Attorney Frazier explained that this article explains the setting up of the Commission districts, along with the special districts, and any fees or tax levies.

There was a question about at-large members. Attorney Frazier said that this form of government does not include at-large members.

- *Next Meeting Goals*

The recording device malfunctioned at this time.

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



Michelle Nations

Assistant to the Commission Clerk