

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
OF THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION
HELD ON THE 4th DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2024

The Caddo Parish Commission met in a Work Session, on the above date, at 3:30 p.m., in the Government Chambers, with Mr. J. Young, presiding, and the following members in attendance constituting a quorum: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Kracman, Lazarus, Thomas, and G. Young (11). ABSENT: Commissioner J. Young (1).

Mrs. Blake gave the invocation, and Mr. G. Young led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance. There were no Agenda Additions, so the Commission moved onto Citizens Comments.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Tim Magner came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

I miss the bling, I should have brought my bling. I wanted to come forward today to talk with you. As I understand it there's an ordinance to be proposed regarding setting a minimum wage for contracts with the Parish of Caddo and I wanted to express our concerns about that, especially for small businesses. Although it may feel like the right thing to do, our research has shown that setting government wage rates hence they have a negative impact particularly on small businesses. Oftentimes it leads to further unemployment as businesses have to scale back the number of employees they have in order to be able to meet the contracts that they put out and so conversely to what it may seem it actually has it has increase in unemployment. Secondly, and I think obviously it increases prices I think when you see a lot of times especially given the amount of inflation that we've seen in material in particular adding an inflated wage rate on top of that creates an additional cost that will be passed on to the parish and the consequently passed on to the taxpayer. So it may in fact reduce the amount of activity that the parish is able to do and finally you know one of the things that we've seen in the economy especially in the last couple of years is an increase in the rate rates. The market is working supply has been constrained we hear from businesses every day about the challenges of hiring staff and So What we've seen is for even entry level jobs and they're paying \$12,13,14 an hour and so to artificially establish that for folks who are unskilled creates upward businesses pressure can set the for wage rates these that they businesses need in for order to be all able of to provide the their services other employees that and they so do I everybody think wins the market itself is working When We the create a dynamic in which employees are able to make that living wage and organizations such as the parish were able to get value for dollar on the projects that they're putting forward and the community benefits from the economic activity that comes from increased opportunities to do business with the parish. Especially for small businesses one of the things that we see it as well in these environments is that only larger businesses tend to be able to absorb these kinds of increases and if we're trying to provide opportunities for the parish to be able to connect with small businesses setting this kind of wage for a weekend is actually coming. Thank you very much!

Jon Glover came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

I have two agenda items that I'd like to bring to you all's attention. I think I did it in an email a couple of days ago hoping I would get a response i did not so definitely understood and I'm standing here to see what can be shared with me when that time comes agenda item that is to be advanced at 11.15 the one we're in to approve an allocation of our funds for Galilee Baptist church for \$500,000 to establish a community lighthouse and when this document that's put here on this piece of information will share on your agenda that was nothing attached whereby me a citizen could understand what has transpired dude gained some information Understanding that you all did have a meeting and that there was some things that were discussed I've been privy to get a copy of those agenda minutes and I still have some concerns why are we asking for this community lighthouse I went back and I read some information with regards to what constitutes a lighthouse I don't see it whereby such should be even considered reading the minutes. I was looking at a comment that was made that said Galilee stands prepared and is ready to serve the community in a state of crisis and natural disaster where that is indeed the case why do you need \$500,000? I just need to make; make it make sense then there was another item I'm going faster than I normally would an because additional there are two that I wanted to address. The summer item number, ordinance 6474 of 2024 asking for an additional \$50,000 for a safe summer program. I'd like to know the specifics of that program and what those dollars will be a generated towards, now if it is for 2025 then it should not have said additional so I'm considering that it must be a putter 2024 allocations I just liked for someone in our conversations and maybe I can see something that can address what I've asked here today thank you.

Marvin Muhammed came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

Thank you Madame President and to the Commission, I have the fortunate opportunity to be at the closing of the Economic Development Committee; which I'm grateful but I was only permitted to do that because I got rained out. And I say that as a small business owner a subcontractor here the city's Shreveport, in than the Parish of Caddo within that in that meeting I was I was enjoyed to see that they was discussion that is on the agenda of ordinance 6477 and I was elated to see that the present board members committee members of the members of the meeting decided to move it forward to put forward the work and this is why. Federal own the federal there is a pay scale called the Davis Bacon scale in contractors who submit these to the federal government are mandated to pay their workers local or prevailing wages, plus benefits and of course those dollars It's determined though the administrator of the wage and label the department. So, I want to commend this, what the committee of course I did and I'm hoping in praying of

this commission moves this thing over the third promotes consideration. Let me say this in response to the comments that I heard earlier, as a small contractor this measure will not impact me negatively. There isn't one person and works for my company that makes less than \$15; no one. The guy that's coming in and off the street makes \$15 about that's only a \$120 a day \$2400 time 12 that's not even a livable wage. I just want to say that and I say this and in closing just in case there are some questions about my footprint here in the city of Shreveport here in this Parish; this is the latest edition of the 318 forum and on page 26 we have the verdict so we're here in the parish we're working and I can assure you that this would not negatively impact me thank you.

VISITORS

- **My Community Cares & Fathers On A Mission**

Community members identified the absence of support services for fathers. My Community Cares reached out to the Fathers on a Mission (FOAM) organization in Baton Rouge for a potential collaboration, aiming to bring the program to Shreveport in hopes of providing essential support to fathers in Caddo Parish.

Mr. Levar Robinson, founder of FOAM, said that there are various organizations that serve mothers and children, but there is a lack of resources and support for fathers. FOAM offers fatherhood classes and programs to enhance the lives of fathers and their families. These guided discussions connect fathers to resources, such as workforce development, education, and counseling, to strengthen their families.

Mr. Robinson also talked about a Project Family Bill, which is a case management process that identifies and addresses the needs of fathers and their families.

One in four children in the U.S. grow up without a father figure in the home. He discussed the importance of a father's involvement in their children's lives. Fathers play a crucial role in children's education and overall well-being. Various challenges faced by fathers in maintaining regular contact with their children. Parental alienation, lack of access to court systems, unstable living arrangements, and employment challenges contribute to these difficulties. Intimidation by judges, lawyers, and generational conditioning further compound the issue.

Louisiana ranks at the bottom in terms of support for fathers. Various factors contribute to this, including policy scores for educational support, school employment assistance programs, family law support, and health and mental health support. Mr. Robinson said that early childhood education should start at home with both parents involved. Fathers should be provided with resources and education to support their role.

Factors such as emotional support, communication, parenting, social determinants of health, and economic systems affect communities. These factors need to be addressed, along with providing resources, to make a significant change in the State of Louisiana.

Mr. Robinson said that hearing others' experiences and ideas with regards to fatherhood provides valuable insights. He also mentioned that some participants were reluctant to start the program, but once it was over, they were eager to sign back up. These factors need to be addressed, along with providing resources, to make a significant change in the State of Louisiana.

Mr. Robinson closed with saying that both parents play a crucial role in their children's lives. Fathers' involvement in children's lives leads to improved outcomes, including reduced prison rates, better pregnancy outcomes for girls, and higher academic achievement.

Mrs. Gage-Watts thanked Fathers On A Mission for coming to the Commission meeting today and presenting this information. She suggested that they attend a Juvenile Justice Committee meeting in the future.

Mrs. Blake also thanked FOAM for coming to today's meeting and "filling the gap" in the community with regards to fathers and their families. She said that fathers who are present are the "biggest missing link in society". She is interested in hearing more about their organization.

Mr. Jones joined in commending FOAM for their success in providing resources to fathers. He said that this is an important initiative to ensure that the fathers are a part of their children's lives.

Mr. G. Young said that a father figure is not always present in a home. He explained that most families that grew up in his neighborhood did not have a father figure. Mr. G. Young thanked FOAM for the work they are doing in the community.

Mr. Thomas commended My Community Cares for bringing this program to Caddo Parish.

Mr. Burrell said that many young men lack father figures and turn to negative paths. Initiatives like this are crucial and should be promoted consistently, he said.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know how this organization is funded. Mr. Robinson said that he originally was paying for the program out of his own pocket. He then started receiving community grants

and TANF funding. He said that they are on the cusp of federal funding.

Mrs. Gage-Watts thanked My Community Cares and Fathers On A Mission for coming to today's Work Session.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

- Juvenile Detention

Parish Administrator, Erica Bryant, said that there are sixteen children in the Detention Center; four of which are OJJ. There is one 17-year old, and thirteen children at CCC. There are 474 children on probation.

- Special Session of the Louisiana Legislature

Mrs. Bryant said that the Special Session is scheduled for Wednesday, November 6. They are preparing a one-pager on how some of these bills may impact Caddo Parish.

- Commission Budget Retreat

Mrs. Bryant said that the Commissioners' budget retreat has been rescheduled to November 14 at 9:30 a.m. She will provide more information as it becomes available.

- Jack & Jill of America Presentation

Taylor, Madison, and Dawson of the Red River Chapter of the Jack & Jill of America, Inc. came before the Commission and gave a brief summary of the organization. In 1948 the idea of dividing the organization into a regional structure was initially put before the members at the Third Annual meeting of Jack and Jill of America, Incorporated held in Washington, D.C. It was suggested to shorten the travel time to annual meetings, allow more time for discussions on issues by all of the membership prior to attending national meetings and allow the inclusion of children at the meetings.

In 1957, at the Annual Convention held in San Francisco, the Regional Plan was fully adopted. Today there are seven regions which comprise Jack and Jill of America. Jack and Jill distributes their chapters across seven geographical regions. Within those regions, there are 262 chapters, which are made up of 40,000 active and engaged family members.

Mrs. Gage-Watts was amazed at the maturity of the young people who gave the Jack & Jill presentation. She thanked them for their leadership and said that they are so proud of the hard work they have done thus far.

Mr. Burrell, Mrs. Blake, Mr. Thomas, and Mr. Cothran all stated that they were extremely impressed by the presenters of Jack and Jill. They all wish them much success in the future. The commissioners expressed their appreciation for the students' visit and encouraged them to continue learning about local government.

COMMISSION REMARKS

- Mr. Thomas announced that Mrs. Gage-Watts was elected as a representative to the Executive Board of Directors for the Region IV Police Jury Association. Mr. Thomas said that Mr. Cothran urged Mrs. Gage-Watts to put her name in the hat since there was no representation from Caddo Parish on the board. This was the type of representation that we needed on the Region IV Board, he said.

- Mr. Epperson said that Operation Green Light is starting from November 4-11, and is done in conjunction with the National Association of County Officials. He encouraged all to light up their homes and businesses in green.

The 14th Annual Veterans Honor Ceremony will be held on November 9 at 5 p.m. at the Municipal Auditorium in Shreveport, Louisiana. The ceremony will recognize 11 veterans for their military and community service. The Parade will be held on Sunday, November 10, at 2 p.m. at the Louisiana State Fairgrounds. The Grand Marshal will be Sam Archie Mattox, a 105-year-old World War II veteran, who is the oldest living WWII veteran in the State of Louisiana, and possibly the nation.

- Mr. Cothran talked about severe weather. Everyone should be prepared to act as a first responder during severe weather, he said.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mrs. Gage-Watts encouraged everyone to go out and vote tomorrow during the Presidential Election.

OLD BUSINESS

It was **moved by Mr. G. Young**, seconded by Mr. Epperson, *that Ordinance No. 6477 of*

2024, an ordinance to adopt Chapter 2, Article V, Division 4 of the Parish Code of Ordinances relative to parish contracts, to provide for the payment of a living wage by contractors with the Parish, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto be postponed to the December 5, 2024 Regular Session.

Mr. G. Young said that this topic has been discussed extensively, but he would like to turn the discussion over to Legal.

Attorney Frazier explained that research was conducted on the possibility of implementing a minimum wage requirement for contractors on parish contracts. There is no general legal prohibition against having a minimum wage requirement for contractors on Parish contractors; however, contractors providing services pursuant to public law are exempt. She also pointed out that the Committee recommended exemption for employers with 15 or fewer employees; and student workers and volunteers would be exempt. Contractors must self-certify compliance with the wage requirement. An anonymous reporting mechanism will allow violations to be reported to the parish for investigation.

Mr. Atkins said that he is not opposed to a living wage for employees of Caddo Parish, but he is opposed to imposing it on third-party contractors. He is concerned about increased costs and bureaucracy for taxpayers.

Substitute motion by Mr. Burrell to englobo and advance the remainder of the items under New Business. Motion died due to the lack of a second.

At this time, Mr. G. Young's original motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Thomas, and G. Young (7). NAYS: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Kracman, and Lazarus (4). ABSENT: Commissioner J. Young (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

NEW BUSINESS

It was **moved by Mr. Jones**, seconded by Mr. Epperson, *that the following items be engloboed and moved to Thursday's Regular Session for introduction and consideration:*

- *Ordinance No. 6505 of 2024, an ordinance to amend Volume II of the Code of Ordinances of the Parish of Caddo, as amended, the Caddo Parish Unified Development Code, relative to dwelling-manufactured home and the use matrix, with all their provisions included herein, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6506 of 2024, an ordinance to amend Volume II of the Code of Ordinances of the Parish of Caddo, as amended, the Caddo Parish Unified Development Code, by amending the zoning of property located northwest corner of Blanchard Furrh Road and Lucas Lane, Caddo Parish, Louisiana, from R-A, Rural Agricultural Zoning District, to R-A PUD, Rural Agricultural Planned Unit Development Zoning District, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6507 of 2024, an ordinance to amend Volume II of the Code of Ordinances of the Parish of Caddo, as amended, the Caddo Parish Unified Development Code, by amending the zoning of property located northwest corner of Woolworth Road and Tanner Road, Caddo Parish, Louisiana, from I-1, Light Industrial Zoning District, to R-A, Rural Agricultural Zoning District, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6508 of 2024, an ordinance to accept the streets in Simpson Acres Unit No. 4 into the Parish of Caddo Road System, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6509 of 2024, an ordinance to close and abandon a street dedication in the Happy Trails Subdivision, in Section 4, Township 14 North, Range 15 West, in the Parish of Caddo, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Resolution No. 72 of 2024, a resolution supporting raising the Constables' hourly rate for litter enforcement and otherwise providing with respect thereto*
- *Resolution No. 73 of 2024, a resolution to provide an annual certification to the State of Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development in accordance with the Off-System Bridge Replacement Program, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Resolution No. 74 of 2024, a resolution approving the holding of an election in Caddo Parish Fire District No. 4, State of Louisiana, on Saturday, March 29, 2025, to authorize the levy of a Sales & Use Tax therein*
- *Resolution No. 75 of 2024, a resolution approving the holding of an election in*

Caddo Parish Fire District No. 6, State of Louisiana, on Saturday, March 29, 2025, to authorize the levy of a Sales & Use Tax therein

- *Resolution No. 76 of 2025, a resolution to authorize the Caddo Parish Administrator to direct and authorize the Louisiana State Mineral & Energy Board and the Office of Mineral Resources to accept nominations, advertise for, accept and award bids, and execute all oil, gas, and mineral leases on certain mineral interests owned by the Parish of Caddo, and otherwise providing with respect thereto*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition for Cleveland White*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition for Youree Drive Middle School Student of the Year, Kelsey Samuel*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition for Toni Thibeaux*
- *Proclamation Indigenous People's Day in Caddo Parish*

Mr. Cothran asked for more clarification on Resolution No. 72 of 2024 with regards to increasing the constables wage. Mrs. Bryant explained that the current hourly rate for JPs handling litter cases is \$40/hour. This proposal aims to raise this rate to \$50 per hour. The increased pay is intended to encourage greater participation in the litter citation program. She further explained that this would only be when they are out working to cite people in relation to litter. Mrs. Bryant said that they would need to sign a contract with the Parish stating what they would agree to do for that rate. Mrs. Barnett said that there is a cap.

Mr. Kracman said that trash contains hazardous materials, so a safer way to identify owners is needed. He suggested using puncture proof gloves. Constables will receive training on adjudicating litter violations. He also pointed out that Caddo Parish is currently in a War on Litter, and this would coincide with it beautifully.

Mrs. Gage-Watts said that she is in support of this "special operation".

At this time, Mr. Jones' motion carried unanimously.

It was **moved by Mr. Jones**, seconded by Mr. Burrell, *that the authorization to allocate ARPA funds for the Galilee Lighthouse Project in the amount of \$500k be moved to Thursday's Regular Session for consideration.*

Mr. Burrell said that these monies are in the ARPA fund. He said that this action item is to reallocate the funds to the Galilee Lighthouse Project, which will cost between \$400k-\$500k. Any remaining funds will be applied to the next lighthouse project. Mr. Burrell also said that any rebates would go towards the next lighthouse project in Caddo Parish.

Mr. Kracman wanted to know if this was similar to the solar project that came before the Committee a few months ago. Mr. Burrell said that it was. Mr. Kracman said that there is no clear criteria for lighthouse facilities. He does not agree to paying the electricity bill of a church, unless the Commission lights up every church in Caddo Parish.

Mr. Atkins agreed with providing power and water during emergencies, but is concerned about the cost-effectiveness of the proposed approach.

Mr. G. Young wanted to know if the project qualifies for ARPA funds. Mrs. Barnett said that the original project did not qualify, but the guidelines are constantly evolving. She said that there is a path where they might possibly be able to get it eligible, but it is not certain that it would qualify. A potential pathway exists to secure eligibility under storm mitigation.

Mr. G. Young wanted to know rebates were associated with this project. Mrs. Barnett said that the rebate is part of the agreement and revenue associated with the project must be returned to the funding source, especially if it's federal money. Mrs. Bryant said that funds would be reimbursed upon request. She also said that these funds have to be obligated by the end of the year, but spent by 2026.

Mr. G. Young is worried about potential legal issues if funds are granted to one religion but not others. He asked for clarification on the legality of funding religious projects. This raises concerns about the organization's direction and potential violations of individual rights.

Mr. Cothran said that the previous lighthouses were intended as a pilot program with data collection for further funding decisions. He also wanted to know how many lighthouses will be in Shreveport; and who determines where they go. Mrs. Bryant explained that there are federal guidelines that have been established to allow the consideration of funding this type of project. She further explained that once the ARPA dollars are gone, the Commission would not be investing \$500k in someone else's building.

Mr. Cothran then wanted to know why this lighthouse was receiving \$500k, when the others received \$250k. Mrs. Bryant explained that the Parish was contributing a portion of the cost.

Mrs. Blake said that Interfaith came before the American Rescue Plan Committee and explained in detail about the community lighthouses. She is in support of a plan of action, but has concerns that the locations do cover all areas. Mrs. Blake said her district is an aging district and would like to ensure that those people will be able to receive help during a crisis.

Mr. Thomas said that he is in support of this lighthouse project because there is a huge need in the Allendale neighborhood. Lighthouses are a great idea and important for providing resources during natural disasters. Every citizen in the parish should have access to resources during crises, he said.

Call for the Question by Mr. Jones, seconded by Mr. Epperson. Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Jones, Kracman, Lazarus, Thomas, and G. Young (9). NAYS: Commissioners Blake and Gage-Watts (2). ABSENT: Commissioner J. Young (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

At this time, Mr. Jones' original motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Blake, Burrell, Epperson, Jones, Thomas, and G. Young (6). NAYS: Commissioners Atkins, Cothran, Gage-Watts, Kracman, and Lazarus (5). ABSENT: Commissioner J. Young (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

There was discussion regarding the reappointments of Kenny Fedd and Bobby Bass to the Sewerage District No. 7 Board. Mr. G. Young asked for more time to reach out them to determine if they would like to continue to serve on this board. Mrs. Gage-Watts wanted to know if this was included in the englobo. The Clerk of the Commission stated that a vote was not needed, so the Commission moved on. There were no Communiqués nor Citizens Comments.

CONSENT AGENDA

Ordinance No. 6469 of 2024, an ordinance adopting the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Shreve Memorial Library for the year 2025

Ordinance No. 6470 of 2024, an ordinance to deem property surplus and to authorize the transfer of surplus property owned by the Parish of Caddo to Town of Greenwood, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto

Ordinance No. 6471 of 2024, an ordinance to set the General Purpose and Special Purpose millages providing for millage rate adjustments, as allowed by Article VII, Section 23 of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974 and LA R.S. 47:1705 (B), levying and imposing taxes and assessments for 2024 on all the property subject to taxation in the Parish of Caddo, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto

Ordinance No. 6472 of 2024, an ordinance to set the General Purpose and Special Purpose millages providing for an increase in the millage rates not in excess of the prior years maximum rates, as allowed by Article VII, Section 23 of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974 and LA R.S. 47:1705 (B), levying and imposing taxes and assessments for 2024 on all the property subject to taxation in the Parish of Caddo, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto

Ordinance No. 6473 of 2024, an ordinance to donate surplus property under Chapter 19, Article II, Division 3 of the Code of Ordinances relative to donation of adjudicated property acquired by the Parish under LA. R.S. 47:2236 et seq., to authorize the donation of property to Friends of Friends, Inc., and to otherwise provide with respect thereto

Ordinance No. 6474 of 2024, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Riverboat Fund and the Oil & Gas Fund to provide an additional appropriation for the Safe Summer Program and to otherwise provide with respect thereto

Ordinance No. 6475 of 2024, an ordinance declaring the intent of the Parish under LA. R.S. 47:2236 to acquire full ownership interest in six parcels of property identified by Caddo Parish Tax Assessor's geographical numbers 171402-127-0038-00, 181437-055-0010-00, 181437-068-0043-00, 181437-122-0024-00, 171401-158-0002-00, and 171423-054-0001-00 and to otherwise provide with respect thereto

Ordinance No. 6476 of 2024, an ordinance declaring the intent of the Parish under LA. R.S. 47:2236 to acquire full ownership interest in a parcel of property identified by Caddo Parish Tax Assessor's geographical number 181435-128-0054-00 and described as Lot 54 and one half adjacent abandoned alley, Boisseau Annex, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto

At this time, there was no further discussion to come before the Commission, so the

Commission adjourned at 5:19 p.m.



Assistant to the Commission Clerk