

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
OF THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION
HELD ON THE 17th DAY OF MARCH, 2025

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

Mr. Epperson gave the invocation, and Mr. Atkins led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance. There were no Agenda Additions, so the Commission move onto Citizens Comments.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

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

I rise to speak to you all to encourage you first to be on one accord when you're doing the business of the Parish. We, the citizens, have been hearing so much here lately about different issues, and we just need to understand where our members, Commissioners, are concerned that we are one accord. We cannot demonstrate behaviors and attitudes that divide us. We just cannot do it; and yet, we are seeing this more and more frequently. It doesn't matter why we got here, we're here. What we now need to do is figure out how you're going to get away from here. Now, I move onto your agenda, which I often read, every time you put one out. Your first agenda item is 11.1, Advance the introduction of Ordinance 6525 of 2025. Well, I had an issue or concern. Let's say that it's asking for 50% of the income generated from the Parish's share of sport wagering received, and those funds are to go to the E. Edward Jones Housing Trust Fund to address blight and whatever else. First, what I want to know is how much do these receipts represent? I mean, where's the dollar amount? To say 50%, but 50% of what? Then, I want to know how much of that 50% is going to be diverted to E. Edward Jones housing program? And, why not the funds directed to the Public Work Divisions where we can address roads or even property standards where blight can truly be addressed? But we're directing these funds and other than, to a housing trust fund—I'd like to understand what was that all about? Moving right along, you had some resolutions 18 of 2025, 19 of 2025, and 20 of 2025, with regards to 18 of 2025, I wanted to know how many of the federal employees that we are saying that have been fired. Do we know? And then too, with the national aid programs, what are they? How do they impact us locally? And then, with the last one, the tariffs—you talk about partners or partnerships, what are those partnerships? So you open up me trying to understand what specifically you are bringing forward to me a citizen without me saying the specifics of what you're trying to accomplish. I just ask again that when we do these things, that we gift off the consequences that can come from what we're doing. You know we're not here to discard or have division, but we definitely don't want to be led with the division from those that have been elected. Thank you.

Michael Williams came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

Good evening to this body, to the newly elected President, the Vice President. Mr. Oliver and Mr. Lester Smith is in the room with the NAACP. I rise to the podium to say that we're living at a time where we need to have inclusion in America. We see across America, all of the cuts, really hurts the poor people and middle class America. Where we see a democracy has been turned into hypocrisy. We do a ritual every meeting about the Pledge of Allegiance, and we say a prayer. It is almost like is a perpetrate of crime here on this particular body. We see all the cuts that affect poor people across this country, whether it wouldn't be a time where we have a nation of inclusion of working together, not based on party affiliation or social economic background or a zip code. But until we get to a nation where we craft and create together and be a nation of inclusion that we're working together for the benefit of all citizen, where we will continue to see the mood swing in America, and the City of Shreveport at an all time low. We gotta--our people need to work, job, housing, education--no matter if your black, brown, blue or white; Democrat, Republican-- we all need the same thing. The only thing equal with America is the weather outside right now. Its equal. It has never been equal on the floor of this horseshoe since I'd been elected years ago. Now we still fighting for the same policy we fought for years ago. If we can't find people--like minded people who [inaudible] they want to work in the inspiration of cooperation, not competition. You can't expect a people that's been discriminated again for many years and not saying nothing to be silent. That means that would be unethical and unreal. We all created, but we're not treated equal on the soil of America. That is true and a fact. These are national valid statistics. Isn't time for us to come to work together. When we vote like we feel with racial lines and party lines. That's just reality. I don't mean to come up here and talk about race. But Democrat Republicans now have a barbaric inhuman policy that heard what working class poor people. And you get up and say, before God; go to church on Sunday saying you love God's people. You're hurting God's people when you're voting to take food at their mouth, water, food, clothes, shelter--you hurt the least of these! The widows...the poor! That's what you are doing Republicans. That is wrong. One day you gotta be accountable of what you're doing. So stop all this perpetuate; stop preaching the Constitution; stop preaching the Bible; and really do what you've been elected to do. If we can't find people that can change the policy, or do we change the people that need to change the policy. Elect new people. If you can't get the job done, you [inaudible] why would I give you four more years of the same? I stopped by the Registrar of Votes, The City Council, The Caddo Parish Commission, and the Superintendent of the School Board. It's business as usual. It's not longer acceptable. I'm pray you're listening to God if anybody else because you gonna reap what you sow today. God bless you, and God bless America.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

- Love the Boot Week—April 7-11

Mrs. Bryant announced that Love the Boot Week is April 7-April 11.

- Juvenile Detention

Mrs. Bryant said that there are nineteen children in the Juvenile Detention Center; two of which are OJJ. There are two 17-year-olds, twenty-seven juveniles at CCC, and 423 children on probation.

- Financial Statements—February, 2025

Mrs. Bryant said that the February 2025 financials are placed at each Commissioners' station, as well as, being attached to the agenda.

COMMISSION REMARKS

- Mr. Epperson requested that Mrs. Bryant reach out to Dr. Whyte with regards to the measles outbreak.
- Mrs. Gage-Watts thanked Administration and Public Works for helping clean up Village Square Apartments. Providence House is actively processing those requests to help citizens with relocating. Mrs. Bryant said that they are also working with Hope Connections for immediate housing.
- Mr. J. Young addressed the citizen comment that was mentioned earlier. He said that the currently balance is \$75k. He also stated that the Public Works Department is adequately funded. The E. Edward Jones Housing Trust Fund currently has approximately \$800k, but that fund does not currently have a funding source. This ordinance aims to provide a continuous funding source.
- Mr. Thomas reported that a successful and safe 318 Weekend was celebrated in downtown Shreveport. Events included a festival at Caddo Common's Park, an inaugural food fest at the Municipal Auditorium, and a fashion show. He also encouraged all citizens to take a photo with the 318 prop.
- Mr. Cothran said that Mrs. Bryant did an outstanding job representing the Parish at the Women's Business Association. There were several other successful events that he attended.
- Mr. Atkins said that the Audit & Finance Committee met and focused on Information Systems Access Process, as well as, the Payroll & Benefits Issues.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mrs. Gage-Watts reminded everyone that early voting is ongoing.

OLD BUSINESS

The Clerk of the Commission reminded the Commissioners to submit their nominations to the Youth Advisory Council. Mrs. Gage-Watts said that there are thirteen slots available. It was also mentioned that this council is open to 9th-11th graders.

NEW BUSINESS

It was **moved by Mr. J. Young**, seconded by Mr. Jones, *that Ordinance No. 6252 of 2025, an ordinance dedicating fifty percent (50%) of the income generated from the Parish share of sports wagering receipts to the E. Edward Jones Housing Trust Fund and amending the General Fund and the E. Edward Jones Housing Trust Fund for sports wagering revenues, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be introduced during Thursday's Regular Session.

Mr. J. Young said that this funding will replenish the E. Edward Jones Housing Trust Fund. The goal is to participate in land banking to address the housing crisis in Caddo Parish.

Mr. Atkins said that he will vote to forward this on because he would like to know more about, but he has concerns with refurbishing houses in the City of Shreveport.

Mr. Cothran wanted to know if this will be used for littering or housing. He also wanted a "hard number" prior to voting on this ordinance.

Mr. Jones said that the 50% will fluctuate each year. The amount depends on participation in sports betting.

Mrs. Bryant said that is a new revenue source for the E. Edward Jones Housing Trust Fund.

She also agreed that this number will fluctuate each year depending on participation.

Mr. Jones wanted to know if this was similar to the NGO process. Mrs. Bryant said that this would go through the budget process. The current funding is allocated to professional services related to property standards, but could support housing projects in the future.

Mrs. Bryant also pointed out that the Parish already receives these funds, but they go directly in the General Fund. Since this is a new revenue source, the Commission is voting where to put some of those dollars.

Substitute motion by Mrs. Gage-Watts, seconded by Mrs. Blake, *that Ordinance No. 6525 of 2025* be introduced during the Thursday Regular Session and be remanded to the Long Range Planning Committee for further vetting.

Mrs. Gage-Watts said that there are several questions and concerns regarding this ordinance.

Mr. Cothran agreed and said that there are citizens who are not aware of the E. Edward Jones Housing Trust Fund. He also would like to vet this ordinance further.

Mr. Burrell pointed out that this fund was named after the late Dr. E. Edwards Jones.

At this time, Mrs. Gage-Watts' substitute motion carried unanimously by those members who were present.

It was **moved by Mr. Atkins**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *that the following resolutions be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration:*

- *Resolution No. 16 of 2025, a resolution to authorize the Caddo Parish Administrator to approve the assignment, bill of sale, and conveyance of State Agency Leases No. 22265 and No. 22266 from Cypress Energy Partners, LLC to Paloma Natural Gas, LLC and otherwise providing with respect thereto*
- *Resolution No. 17 of 2025, a resolution to authorize the Caddo Parish Administrator to execute the subsurface use agreement with Paloma Natural Gas, LLC, and otherwise providing with respect thereto*

At this time, Mr. Atkins' motion carried unanimously by those members who were present.

It was **moved by Mr. Epperson**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *that the following resolutions be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration:*

- *Resolution No. 18 of 2025, a resolution opposing the mass firings of federal employees, and otherwise providing with respect thereto*
- *Resolution No. 19 of 2025, a resolution opposing cuts to national aid programs, and otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Resolution No. 20 of 2025, a resolution opposing tariffs against trading partners, and otherwise providing with respect thereto*

Mr. Epperson said that Resolution No. 19 of 2025 includes programs such as Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP, Veterans' Programs, etc. He further explained that if Medicaid is cut, nursing homes will be closed as well. Mr. Epperson said that the people who are making these decisions don't shop at the Super One, Walmart, or Sam's. These resolutions affect all of us, he said. Mr. Epperson would like to get a dialogue started and asked that everyone support these resolutions.

Mr. Cothran thanked Mr. Epperson for bringing these resolutions forward. People are losing jobs, he said. Mr. Cothran suggested hosting a job fair for people in this community.

Mr. Atkins said that these are difficult times. He believes that the federal government is too big and needs to be downsized. Mr. Atkins is supportive of the changes being proposed by the President, and he will be voting against these proposed resolutions.

Mrs. Gage-Watts thanked Mr. Epperson for introducing these resolutions. She said that as Commissioners, they are able to provide resolutions to push back on things that directly impact and affect this community. She is in support of these resolutions.

Mr. Burrell said that we are in troubled times, and it is his hope that America is still a democracy when this settles down. All politics are local, he said.

Mr. Thomas mentioned the programs that are being affected by the changes. He emphasized the importance of considering the human cost associated with these programs.

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

**CADDO PARISH COMMISSION ACTING AS THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY
OF THE I-49 NORTH CORRIDOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT**

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mr. Burrell, *that the I-49 North Corridor Economic Development District Resolution No. 1 of 2025, a resolution providing Notice of Intention to levy and collect a two cent Sales and Use Tax upon the sale at retail, the use, the lease or rental, the consumption and storage for use or consumption, of tangible personal property and other property subject to Sales and Use Tax in the State of Louisiana either now or in the future and on sales of services within the boundaries of the I-49 North Corridor Economic Development District for a period commencing on May 1, 2025 and ending on May 31, 2032 in accordance with and as authorized by Part II, Chapter 27 of Title 33 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, as amended; and authorizing the publication of a Notice of Intention to levy and collect such Sales and Use Tax; and providing for other matters in connection therewith* be moved with the final passage being April 17, 2025.

Mr. Kracman is in opposition to this sales tax. He mentioned that there isn't a contract that obligates the Parish to the 2% increase. He explained that this was discussed, but never promised. Mr. Kracman reviewed the minutes of the IDB, but found no such contract. He did find that the road that is part of the infrastructure is not included in the TIF. Mr. Kracman asked if this was legal. He also pointed out that the 2% tax will not be applied to fuel, only tangible things within the store. Mr. Kracman explained that the store created twenty-two jobs. He said that ICE detained seven employees from the truck stop and deported them. He read aloud a letter from Representative McCormick confirming this. (The letter has been included in the official record.)

Mr. J. Young said that there was a unanimous vote in favor of the original ordinance that "local and state sales tax increments and local property and hotel occupancy tax increments are expected to be determined and used to fund the Parish of Caddo..." He said that the motion passed and it was a mutual expectation that was voted into law. Mr. J. Young will vote to move this item forward, but is interested in the two concerns that Mr. Kracman brought forward with regards to the road being outside of the TIF and the ICE raid.

Mr. Burrell reiterated that the 2% tax increase would only be for the TIF, not all of Hosston. He then wanted to know if the residents of Hosston are forced to purchase items from the truck stop. Mrs. Bryant said that she is not aware of anything that will force the residents to purchase items from the truck stop. She also said that the residents of Hosston can choose to buy wherever they want to buy.

Mr. Atkins agreed that in the past, the Commission voted to form an entity after which TIF taxes could be imposed if they were voted on. Currently, it appears, that the people of North Caddo are not supportive of imposing a tax through this entity. Mr. Atkins said that the additional 2% tax would bump up the sales tax to 12.5%, which is a large number for sales tax. He also mentioned that he is not comfortable going against the desires of the Commissioner from that area. Mr. Atkins said that he will be voting against the 2% tax increase.

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

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mr. Jones, *that the I-49 North Corridor Economic Development District Resolution No. 2 of 2025, a resolution establishing a Sales Tax within the boundaries of the I-49 North Corridor Economic Development District in connection with the Pilot Agreement with Edgemont Holdings, LLC, and otherwise providing with respect thereto* be moved with the final passage being April 17, 2025.

Mr. J. Young reiterated that the Commissioners who voted on this TIF originally voted on "local and state sales tax increments and local property and hotel occupancy tax increments are expected to be determined and used to fund the Parish of Caddo..." He said that this obligates this body to follow through.

Mr. Atkins said that "expected to be determined" leaves lots of room for future consideration.

Mr. Kracman believes that this is standard language for a pilot program. He also reiterated that the 2% tax increase is only for the truckstop, not all of Hosston or Caddo Parish. Mr. Kracman explained that this truck stop is the only shopping center in Hosston, so seemingly it affects all of Hosston.

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

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mr. Jones, *that the following items be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration:*

- *Special Resolution of Recognition for the Huntington Girls Basketball State Championship Team*
- *Special Resolution Celebrating 318 Day Festival and Billy Anderson*
- *Special Resolution Celebrating Designer LaTasha V. Henderson*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition for Daytriona "Rich Auntie DaDa" Coleman and her 318 Food Fest*

Substitute motion by Mr. J. Young, seconded by Mr. Atkins, *that the following items be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration:*

- *Special Resolution of Recognition for the Huntington Girls Basketball State Championship Team*
- *Special Resolution Celebrating 318 Day Festival and Billy Anderson*
- *Special Resolution Celebrating Designer LaTasha V. Henderson*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition for Daytriona "Rich Auntie DaDa" Coleman and her 318 Food Fest*
- *Reappointment of Judge Stephen Callaway to the Caddo-Bossier Port Commission*
- *Adoption of the 2025 Audit Plan*

Mr. Atkins said that the Audit & Finance Committee met today and voted that the IS Access Processes and the Payroll & Benefits processes are the next areas to be audited. It passed in committee with unanimous support.

At this time, Mr. J. Young's substitute motion carried unanimously of those members who were present.

COMMUNIQUES & COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Mr. Thomas thanked Parks & Recreation for all of their support during 318 Day.
- Mrs. Blake talked about the fire at Pratt Industries. She thanked the firefighters and first responders who were able to get the blaze under control.
- Mr. Epperson read aloud the following comment:

Please read in your work group. A statement from Jake Paneya, 100% disabled veteran. The termination of federal employees directly impacts the VA and the quality of care that is received. As a representative for the clinical staff at the VA in Shreveport, I see firsthand how these cuts affect both, those who provide care, and those who depend on it. With over 30% of their own employees and contractors being veterans or military spouses, these jobs losses These job losses don't just workers, they hurt those who have served our nation. This is not about politics. It's about protecting those who dedicated their lives to this country. Republicans, Democrats, Independents alike are feeling the uncertainty and fear. I want to personally thank you and your Commission for standing with veterans and federal employees during these challenging times. A special thank you to yours truly, where his unwavering dedication to veterans and military families in our community. Your support makes a great deal of difference.

He also talked about the ease of the website. He said that citizens can go online and research and review everything the Commission is doing.

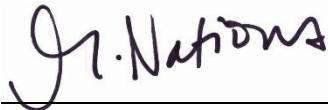
- Mr. Cothran thanked Animal Services for assisting a constituent removing a dead deer that was in their yard.
- Mrs. Gage-Watts acknowledged the President and Vice-President of the NAACP.

There were no Citizens Comments, late arrivals.

CONSENT AGENDA

- *Ordinance No. 6523 of 2025, an ordinance establishing a sales tax within the boundaries of the I-49 North Corridor Economic Development District in connection with the pilot agreement with Edgemont Holdings, LLC*
- *Ordinance No. 6524 of 2025, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Oil & Gas Fund and Economic Development Fund to provide an appropriation of \$100,000 for the Shreveport Classing, 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 5:03 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Nations". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michelle Nations
Assistant to the Commission Clerk