

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION
OF THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION
HELD ON THE 5th DAY OF JUNE, 2025

The Caddo Parish Commission met in a Regular 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, G. Young, and J. Young (12). ABSENT: None (0).

Mrs. Blake gave the invocation, and Mr. Epperson led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA ADDITIONS

It was **moved by Mr. J. Young**, seconded by Mr. Thomas, *that the agenda be expanded and accept the recommendations for revisions to the NGO timeline and application* be added under New Business.

Mr. J. Young said that this agenda is refinement and improvement for the NGO and economic development application process.

Mr. Burrell mentioned that this will take effect in 2026

Mr. Thomas reminded everyone that this is for updates regarding the application process as discussed in committee.

At this time, Mr. J. Young's motion carried unanimously, and this item was placed under New Business on the agenda.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Sherri Fleckenstein came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

I have the privilege of leading the Shreveport free mom hugs group. Everyone at an event becomes our kid and we give high fives and hugs. but most of all, we listen. Our goal is to make our kids feel loved, seen and accepted. By formally acknowledging pride month, the city of Shreveport can do the same thing. How did I get involved? Well, several Junes ago, my own child came out and by chance I'd heard a P- flag and PACE. Luckily, someone from P- flag answered my Facebook message plea. There was a mom on the end of the line. We spoke for a little while and she told me that her child had left the area because of the lack of support in this area. This made me really sad because ugh I want my child to stay. Shreveport, has nurtured me, Shreveport has become my hometown, and I want it to be my kids' hometown too. Several minutes later, someone from PACE answered my plea, and within just a few minutes, I had a support group for my child. So, I was armed with information. A few days later, we went to that meeting and I saw my thrilled smile for the first time in months. Throughout the coming months, my child's depression lifted because they've had a place where they belonged. We were lucky, but so many other parents are not. Many of us have no idea where to go. Especially in cities that do not support pride events. According to a survey by the Trevor project in 2023 39% of our LGBTQ youth consider suicide in the past year, including 46% of transgender and non-binary young people. More than 2 in 10 LGBTQ, young people attempted suicide. Nearly half of all of our youth experience bullying. And the LGBTQ students who reported being bullied had 3 times greater odds of attempting suicide. These youth have a greater risk of suicide due to the lack of affirmation from society at large. 84% of the youth surveyed wanted mental healthcare. Over half are not able to do this and pride events such as Field Gay and Pride in the park connect people to these services. This information keeps our youth alive. And Shreveport should want to be known as a city who's interested in keeping its youth alive. Can you imagine as a young person, knowing your whole city affirms your existence? Can you imagine what that person would do for our city in the future? You know, I've never come to a pride event where I didn't feel accepted, informed, and affirmed. I would like the city of Shreveport to officially recognize pride month and to fully embody those ideals. Thank you.

Mark Nettles came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

I want to thank everyone here for this opportunity to speak. Um and first I want to say that I believe every person in this room is imperfect. Um we're all just here trying to survive and enjoy each day. Um, I also want to say I fully support the resolution and recognize Pride month and continued sporting future events allow LGBTQ plus individuals and their loved ones, living breathing, human beings, all to thrive in community. I was born and raised in Shreveport, and after moving away as a young adult for 7 years, I returned with my family to raise my children among their grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and old friends and also to begin my second career here as a therapist for children and adults. My parents are from the silent generation, the one between the greatest generation and the baby boomers. While um, they didn't set me up with a multimillion-dollar business takeover, um they did give me a pretty good childhood working side by side with diverse members of all communities, a lineman and a nurse. Um and even if they

haven't always understood the way others used to live, they've always been open to try. Being silent does not mean they have nothing to say, but it did mean for me the encouragement to live a Life authentically and to tend to my own concerns. My concerns today arise from my appreciation for the bravery and empathy that I've had the privilege to know through my work with the members of our local LGBTQ plus community. Every time I hear such vitriolic words about this community, like the one spoken here on Monday, my heart breaks for the youth and who just want to be seen and heard is letting breathing plaid on human beings, deserving of love and respect. When I volunteered at field gay this year, I saw people of all ages gaming with the joy of being seen, and heard that's all heteronormative allies like myself beaming with pride for their friends and loved ones, it was no surprise to me at all that I witnessed no hatred. No abuse and no coercion, but I witnessed kindness, gentleness patience, self-control, peace, love and goodness as it has been said, you will know them by these fruits of the spirit. We're living at a time when supportive communities are in great danger. when community dies, democracy dies, there are ravenous wolves and sheep's clothing who pretend to worship one master. We'll truly serve in another, they worship money and power, and they want all of it for themselves. Again, you will know them by their fruits. Their fruits are just displayed by angrily rating about protecting our children from predators, while gleefully celebrating profits from their meta stock and Tik Tok stock. To this wonderful community behind me, I want to say I see you, I hear you., and you are loved. To everyone else who does not understand or who refuses to I want to share what my mother said to me when I was a little buttheaded 8-year-old. When I was mad at her 1 day, I really leaned into the mean and I told her, I don't like you and I don't love you Does she decide and she said, I'm very sorry to hear you feel that way and I sure hope you change your mind. So, I want you all to know, and then she said, oh I want you to know that I'll always love you. Changing my mind was a simple choice after that, I'm here to try to keep us moving forward and changing our minds towards the more loving community in Shreveport thank you.

Sam Ortiz came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

I would like to begin by thanking the esteemed commissioners for their motion to proclaim June as Pride month. I stand here as someone born here and someone who has called this parish home for my entire life. I'm someone who has spent over a decade of that time actively building up my parish. In addition to that, I also serve my community as a licensed clinical social worker at a local nonprofit agency. I, along with 3 others, created Shreve Pride to provide a safe, accepting, inclusive, and positive environment for our community. Through our efforts we have been able to connect thousands of people to necessary, supports community resources, medical and mental health resources and human connection. Pride is nothing more than the fight for our ability to exist and to exist in peace. The members of our community make up vital pieces of every fabric of this region, from the people who serve us in our restaurants to the people who serve us in public office. The diversity of Caddo's people is what makes us so rich. And the LGBTQ IA plus community is part of that diversity. This month, like every month, we'll strive to uplift, we strive to heal, we strive to connect and we strive to celebrate authenticity within ourselves. We hope that Caddo Parish will be a part of that celebration, but make no mistake, Pride month is not going anywhere and neither am I.

Adrian Critcher came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

I'm a founding member of PACE, a local LGBT advocacy organization, and I'm here today to thank the commission for its past proclamations, recognizing June as pride month, and to support the passage of the resolution before you today, recognizing June 2025 as pride month. At your work session on Monday you heard from a group who used their own personal religious beliefs to implore you to vote against the pride resolution this year. Their speaker used vitriolic language to demonize LGBT people and their families, and even ask our city to deny that LGBT organizations the right to hold public events. If ever the commission needed a reason to support the LGBT community, to make a public statement against the demonization of, and discrimination against LGBT people and their families, that group provided it. Because of groups like the one you heard from on Monday, for years, being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, or having an LGBT family member, was something people were afraid to talk about. This meant the only voices that people heard or the ones completely distorting and misrepresenting the lives of LGBT People, but as more and more LGBT people and their families have decided to come out and lead open, honest lives, Americans are seeing for themselves that the hateful lies that they've been told about LGBT people simply are not true. That true family values mean that all family members are loved, valued, and nurtured for who they are. These are families like mine that remain beautifully whole. I don't think your sexual orientation or your gender identity is something to be proud of or ashamed of. Most of us, regardless of our sexual orientation, or gender identity, strive to lead productive, meaningful lives and in doing so what and deserve the encouragement and support of our families, churches, and government. Yet it's too often these very institutions that reject, demonize, and every year pass laws denying basic rights to LGBT people. Yet, LGBT people still lead lives of contribution, courage and commitment, while facing senseless discrimination. Now that's something to be proud of. So, I'd encourage you once again this year to proclaim June as pride month, to recognize our wonderful LGBT community here that continues to carry on despite the attacks on it by people like the ones you heard from on Monday. Thank you.

Garrett Boyt came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

I just stand to say that LGBT people are valued and honored members of our community

at Holy Cross. Their charity, goodness, and lives bear witness to their love, their faithfulness and their thoughtfulness, despite a lifetime of hostility, declare an essential contribution to the fabric of our community. Their authenticity and sincerity to the vocation of God on their lives is such that it cannot be ignored, try as some might. And so, to the extent that this body considers the sincerely held religious beliefs of members of our community, I would just say that there are indeed many Christians in this parish who find the denigration of LGBT people on the grounds of our shared belief in Christ, to be antithetical to the teachings of the gospel, and the example of Christ. Furthermore, there are many of us, myself included, who would commend the passage of this resolution honoring the contribution of LGBT members of our community as a suitable gesture noting that the values of inclusion, cooperation, mutual affection, and care for those often derided and cast aside, are values that are at the core of pride month. And one would hope at the core of our community as well. Thank you.

Kanya Michelle came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

I'm here today as an ally in support of the pride month resolution. As a Christian woman and as a person who values all members of my community. When there are people who show up to meetings in the interest of making their neighbors feel less safe, less visible, and less valued by the community where we all live our lives together with the common goal of the thriving community. I think it's very important to show up and state that regardless of a resolution to so many of us in Shreveport, members of the LGBTQ plus community are seen, valued, and worthy of safety. Commissioners, I believe that a decision to vote against this resolution, which seeks nothing more than to celebrate queer pride, sends a message that you in your position as commissioner do not personally have interest in seeing, valuing, or caring about LGBTQ members of your Constituency. The choice in this vote doesn't seem to me to be whether or not you as an elected official charged with caring for the outcomes of all members of this parish, see yourself as an ally or even show what side you fall on in what you call a controversial issue, but whether or not you're willing to value all members of your Constituency. Regardless of their lifestyle, I hope you will all choose to vote today for the resolution in support of Pride Month to show us all that you value all members of your community. Thank you.

Lindsey Adams came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

And so we've spoken about several things here, so I'm going to kind of skip through my stuff in agreeance with previous language that has been used by the community and reasons to possibly not do this. So as pride is a nationally recognized month, we are asking for local recognition as well, which symbolizes support and inclusion for the LGBTQ plus community and extends to other marginalized groups as well. This acknowledgment costs nothing, but means everything to those who have historically been excluded and erased. One individual proposed to replace pride month with family month, it's better honor there and others faith in God. I believe this is not an either-or situation. The pride month and family month can coexist, reflecting the diverse tapestry. Another local community after all, LGBTQ plus individuals are part of families too parents, siblings, children, friends, and fellow Christians. As elected officials, you represent all residents.

Paige Hoffpauer came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

My heart is horrified to think the removal of the job core center in one of our most vulnerable areas will go forth without even a discussion. Know all that was said Monday, is this is bad. Really, really bad. Kids are being put out and there is nowhere for them to go. I saw a little clip of one of the students. Fear was in her eyes when she reported she was 38% completed with one of her trainings, and now and she and others are just being put out on the streets with no hope of completion or a brighter day Yes, this is about the children. This encompasses that if you just let me have that time, okay no problem. This should not be the case. Have you studied what it would take to keep the doors open and revamp the system? why should the federal government be paying for our children to get educated Does this follows the city's Department of Education? My comrade syllabus.... This is remaining, this is responding to your work session on Monday. I'm speaking about the pickleball that item 11.11 as well as this. Okay. Could there be alliances made and networking done to reprogram this vital system in our city? But instead, you spent 45 minutes considering \$10 million pickleball, complex to be built with taxpayer money, which you will then charge taxpayers to use this doesn't seem right to me either and it's in my neighborhood, and it would be a very nice addition. What is more valuable to their city? Broken children you'll have to pay for it because you rob them of their purpose because they are not being invested in or taught to the degree that they can take care of themselves or a new pickleball complex that ultimately will grow old because the newness of it will just deteriorate with time and the facility will lose it's gleaned over the course of 10-year period like all our facilities the mayor is trying to revitalize today. No, today's important decision is here. Will we take care of our children, or will we deny the relevancy to a dying decaying city that needs them to that needs them to thrive? The answer is clear. Our hearts are with the children. The children who need your support right now at the job core center, the children who need to be safe in our neighborhood parks and public schools with authorities who believe in the sanctity of marriage, the preciousness of family is and their firm obligation as governing officials to protect these virtues in our city with all their might and strength. I'd like to ask for more time at this point. Gone are the days when we can just bluff our way through a job if you are not called here by God to rule in reign in dignity for the children, if you're a call to protect with righteous regulations and decrees, then you should not be in office here. We ask that you leave and vacate your position if you're one

of these found lacking today. I'm not sure it would be a bad thing just an honest thing. Sometimes we acquire wealth or status to our own demise to save yourself today. So, save yourself today. Leave office if you're not here for the moral and judicial reason God would have you here. Repent and turn back. God will heal you and help you recover with newfound direction and a hope for tomorrow's real, is that real for tomorrow, that's real full of purpose and impact. not niceties and affliction because you're really not qualified for or registering the importance of what this government seat of authority demands. God will replace you with the caring the loving the strength he has in individuals. He has gifted them with to do the job at hand. For those of you who are moral, thank you, I believe your vote, your voting will show that today those of you who are immoral, relieve your position. So, a man or woman appointed to the task by God, you can come in and make virtuous decisions. I say these words with great honor and respect for all of you sitting in the here today. We are all at work in progress and God is not finished with any of us yet. Praise God. I mean all of this with his heart and love for each of you each and every one of you sincerely with gods encouragement to you today. But you are making decisions that affect generations today. The 300 kids being exported today out of the safety of the job course center. The hundreds of thousands of kids who need restoration of the family, husband and wife as protection and role modeling and money that if it's available for pickleball complex at this time, it is certainly available for more righteous matters that are needed first. Perhaps later on the pickleball complex. I am for entertaining ways to stay physically fit, but let's invest in our children today. Vote, no typical ball complex, but no to LGBTQ pride month and though, and vote yes to using work meetings to find viable solutions to meet the current crisis and needs of our city's vital functioning. Thank you for hearing me out today respectfully yours, Paige Hoffpower, Thank you.

There were no Visitors, so the Commission moved onto Regular Session Minutes.

ADOPT REGULAR SESSION MINUTES

It was **moved by Mr. J. Young**, seconded by Mr. Cothran *that the Regular Session Minutes from May 22, 2025 be adopted.* Motion carried unanimously.

SPECIAL RESOLUTIONS

It was **moved by Mr. Atkins**, seconded by Mr. Thomas, *to englobo and adopt the special resolutions:*

- *Special Resolution of Recognition Refus Combs*

Mr. Combs thanked God for his journey through the life that he's leading. He also thanked the Commission for honoring him today.

Mr. G. Young commended Mr. Combs for all he has done for the postal service, especially for minorities. He is grateful to have met "Champ". Mr. Atkins complimented Mr. Combs on his speech and thanked him for his service to the community. Several other Commissioners echoed the same sentiments.

- *Special Resolution of Remembrance Patrina Jenkins*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition Ron Buntyn*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition Chef Niema DiGrazia*

Chef DiGrazia thanked the Commission and the community for supporting her business and her passion. She encouraged all to support small businesses.

Several Commissioners commended Chef Niema DiGrazia for her victory against Bobby Flay. They also thanked her for bringing Sierra Leone to Shreveport/Caddo Parish and wished her well in all of her future endeavors.

- *Special Resolution of Recognition Hebert Penson*
- *Special Resolution for Leroy Powell Street Dedication*
- *Special Resolution of Remembrance Mariah Carter Underwood*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition Evening with the Authors*
- *Proclamation Juneteenth*
- *Proclamation Black Music Month*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition the 250th Anniversary of the United States Army on June 14*

Mr. Epperson read aloud each member who is employed with the Parish of Caddo that has

served in the military. He also briefed the Commission on the history of the United States Army, as well as, the contributions the U.S. Army has provided to America.

Members of the United States Army, Louisiana National Guard, and the 355th Medical Unit thanked the Commission for giving them this proclamation and honoring the Army's birthday.

Mr. Thomas reflected on his journey with the Army. He commended all those who enlisted and gave thanks to all Veterans.

- *Proclamation Men's Health Month*
- *Proclamation Alzheimer's & Brain Health Awareness Month*
- *Proclamation National Cancer Survivors Day*
- *Proclamation PTSD Awareness Month*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition DJ Yoshi*

DJ Yoshi encouraged everyone to follow their dreams. He also invited the community to his upcoming job fair.

The Commissioners thanked DJ Yoshi for putting Shreveport/Caddo Parish on the map through his music and creativity.

- *Special Resolution of Recognition for the LSUS Pilots Baseball Team*
- *Special Resolution of Remembrance Rev. Cleonis Odom*
- *Special Resolution of Remembrance Danny Williams*

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

SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION REFUS COMBS

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission desires to give special recognition to individuals in our community whose lives reflect a legacy of service, humility, and quiet strength; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Refus Combs is one such individual—a man whose steady presence, dedication, and integrity have made a lasting impact in the lives of others, not through accolades or fanfare, but through quiet commitment and consistent action; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Combs is a Veteran of the United States Armed Forces, having honorably served his country and exemplified the values of duty, sacrifice, and patriotism; and

WHEREAS, following his military service, Mr. Combs went on to a distinguished career with the United States Postal Service, where he worked faithfully for many years before his retirement and was an active and engaged member of the Postal Workers Union, advocating for the rights and wellbeing of his fellow employees; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Combs is also an active member of his church, serving as both a deacon & a member of the board of trustees for Trinity Baptist Church, where he embodies the principles of faith, service, and community uplift, offering his time and support wherever there is need; and

WHEREAS, throughout his life, Mr. Combs has consistently made every situation he is part of better—bringing wisdom, encouragement, and integrity—without ever seeking recognition or the spotlight, and though he is often appreciated by those who know him, he is not often formally honored; and

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission wishes to change that today, by acknowledging the profound contributions of Mr. Combs and the example he sets for all through his humility, hard work, and unwavering dedication to others.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, that it does hereby recognize and commend Mr. Refus Combs for his service to his country, his advocacy for workers, his devotion to his faith community, and his invaluable contributions to the greater good of Caddo Parish.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be shared with Mr. Combs and entered into the official records of the Caddo Parish Commission in grateful recognition of a life spent in quiet and faithful service.

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF REMEMBRANCE
PATRINA JENKINS**

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission pauses to honor and remember the life, service, and enduring legacy of the late Patrina Jenkins, a beloved Shreveport advocate and tireless champion for victims and survivors of domestic violence, who passed away in 2022 after a prolonged illness; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Jenkins devoted her life to advocacy, outreach, and healing, particularly through her dedicated work with Project Celebration, an organization that provides crucial resources and support to victims of domestic violence throughout Northwest Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, her passion for service and her courageous efforts to uplift those affected by domestic abuse left a lasting impact on countless lives across Caddo Parish and beyond; and

WHEREAS, to honor her legacy and continue her mission of support and empowerment, a scholarship was established at Louisiana State University Shreveport (LSUS) in Ms. Jenkins' name to assist victims of domestic violence in pursuing higher education, a testament to her unwavering commitment to restoring hope and opportunity; and

WHEREAS, this scholarship was made possible in part through the generous support and vision of Caddo Parish District Attorney James Stewart, whose office continues to champion justice and victim advocacy in the spirit of Patrina Jenkins' example; and

WHEREAS, on Wednesday, May 28, 2025, the City of Shreveport, under the leadership of Mayor Tom Arceneaux, in collaboration with Sportran, led by Executive Director Dinero Washington, will dedicate a bus

stop in honor of Patrina Jenkins at the corner of Hearne Avenue and North Market Street—a location symbolic of access, visibility, and community; and.

WHEREAS, this act of remembrance was made possible through enabling legislation cosponsored by Shreveport City Council Chair Tabatha Taylor and Councilman Jim Taliaferro, demonstrating the City's deep commitment to lifting up the lives and legacies of those who serve our most vulnerable neighbors; and

WHEREAS, Patrina Jenkins' enduring legacy—of compassion, advocacy, and empowerment—continues to inspire ongoing efforts across agencies, nonprofits, and communities to confront domestic violence and create a future where all individuals can live free from abuse;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, that it does hereby honor the life and legacy of Patrina Jenkins, commend the ongoing efforts of Project Celebration, District Attorney James Stewart, LSUS, Sportran, and the City of Shreveport in preserving her memory, and encourage all residents of Caddo Parish to reflect upon her powerful example of courage, compassion, and service.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution shall be presented at the Bus Stop dedication as an expression of the Caddo Parish Commission's deepest respect and gratitude.

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION
RON BUNTYN**

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission recognizes and commends individuals whose lifelong service and dedication have made a lasting impact on our schools, communities, and country; and

WHEREAS, Ronald "Ron" Buntyn has devoted more than 26 years of distinguished service to the Caddo Parish school system, including 21 years as a Caddo Parish School Board employee and 5 years with Burns Security, always demonstrating a steadfast commitment to ensuring the safety, well-being, and success of students and staff alike; and

WHEREAS, for nearly two decades, Ron Buntyn has been a powerful advocate for school employees as a respected and effective leader within the Red River United Union, where he currently serves with honor as Executive Vice President for Paraprofessional and School-Related Personnel (PSRP)—representing teacher's aides and school support staff with strength, vision, and integrity; and

WHEREAS, beyond his professional contributions, Ron Buntyn has remained deeply committed to his community, serving faithfully as a member of Neighbors Involved in Caddo Heights (NICH) for the past 16 years, and bringing transparency and trust to the organization as its Treasurer since 2020; and

WHEREAS, Ron Buntyn also answered the call of duty to his country, serving 21 years in the United States Air Force, where he played a critical role as a Jet Engine Mechanic on a wide range of aircraft, including B-52 Bombers, F-111 Fighter-Bombers, KC-135 and KC-10 Tankers, and C-5 and C-141 Airlift Aircraft, and also serving as a Military Customs Inspector, Munitions Inspector, and leader in transportation and supply operations for the 1837th Engineering Installation Squadron; and

WHEREAS, his honorable military service took him to stations including Barksdale AFB, Kadena AB in Okinawa, Andersen AB in Guam, and Dover AFB in Delaware, and included deployment to Cairo, Egypt, where he participated in the Bright Star 85 military exercise in support of U.S. and allied readiness; and

WHEREAS, Ron Buntyn's life reflects a legacy of discipline, advocacy, leadership, patriotism, and community service—making him a model citizen and a respected figure throughout Caddo Parish;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, that it does hereby congratulate Ronald “Ron” Buntyn on the occasion of his retirement and expresses its deepest appreciation for his extraordinary service to education, labor advocacy, neighborhood development, and the United States of America.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission extends best wishes to Mr. Buntyn for a joyful and fulfilling retirement, confident that his legacy will continue to positively impact Caddo Parish for generations to come.

SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION CHEF NIEMA DIGRAZIA

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission proudly recognizes individuals in our community who exemplify excellence, creativity, and perseverance in their craft and serve as a source of inspiration for others; and

WHEREAS, Chef Niematulai DiGrazia, a culinary artist, entrepreneur, fashion designer and beloved figure in northwest Louisiana, recently showcased her talent on the national stage by competing on the Food Network's acclaimed cooking competition show Beat Bobby Flay—and emerged victorious; and

WHEREAS, her win on Beat Bobby Flay is not only a personal triumph but also a shining moment of pride for the entire Caddo Parish community, where Chef Niema is widely known for her passion for food, her bold flavors, inimitable personality, charm and her unwavering commitment to authenticity; and

WHEREAS, Chef Niema has long been an advocate for cultural culinary heritage, bringing the traditions of her mother's kitchen in Sierra Leone into new contexts, combining krio with creole and infusing her dishes with contemporary flourishes, soulful tradition, and setting the table for storytelling and bringing people around the table and honoring the richness of togetherness and flavor; and

WHEREAS, through her business ventures, work in the fashion industry, community events, and media appearances, Chef Niema DiGrazia has served as a role model for women, young people, and all those pursuing their dreams with faith, grit, and purpose; and

WHEREAS, her victory on national television is a testament to the world-class talent nurtured right here in Caddo Parish and underscores the power of passion, preparation, and perseverance;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, that it does hereby extend its sincerest congratulations and heartfelt admiration to Chef Niema DiGrazia for her outstanding accomplishment and for bringing honor and distinction to herself, her craft, and the people of Caddo Parish and does hereby declare Saturday, June 7th, 2025 as

“Chef Niema DiGrazia Day”

in Caddo Parish, Louisiana, urging all citizens to join with the Caddo Parish Commission to celebrate the Chef Niema for her contributions to the cultural & culinary landscape of our region and wish her continued success in all her future endeavors.

SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION HEBERT PENSON

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission desires to recognize and acknowledge the milestones and special occasions that occur in the lives of those citizens of the Parish who have distinguished themselves through their ongoing demonstration of love and concern for their fellow man and who in doing so have done much to serve the Parish and the larger community; and

WHEREAS, Centenarians have been and continue to be a valuable asset to Caddo Parish through the preservation of our heritage. They provide an excellent example of responsible citizenship for future generations through their loyalty and dedication to the community; and

WHEREAS, Herbert Penson is blessed to have lived 104 glorious years on this earth on June 17, 2025; and

WHEREAS, he was born in Mooringsport, LA on June 17, 1921 but moved to Shreveport, LA after marrying his wife of 70 years, Mrs. Florida Davis Penson, on December 26, 1947; and

WHEREAS, the couple lovingly raised four children: Mary Etta Bradley, John Davis, Cassandra Penson Rhines and Sharon Penson; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Penson proudly served in the United States Army during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Penson has also made a positive impact in this community through his service to the Caddo Parish School Board, where he retired in December 31, 1986; and

WHEREAS, the passing of the years has slowed, but not stopped. "I'm moving slow, but I'm moving", is his favorite saying!

WHEREAS, Mr. Penson is known by many, current and past associates and friends, as a man with a warm, compassionate heart who is ready to serve. He has been a blessing to all he has come in contact with over the past 104 years, and is joined by family and friends to celebrate this exciting milestone in his life.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, this 17th day of June, 2025, that it does hereby extend its warmest and most sincere congratulations to Mr. Herbert Penson upon his attainment of his 104th Birthday and hereby declares this as:

'Herbert Penson Day'

in Caddo Parish and prays that Mr. Herbert Penson will greatly enjoy the activities of his special day, and that he will be will be blessed with a continuation of life, health, happiness and contentment for the rest of his days.

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION
LEROY POWELL STREET DEDICATION**

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Caddo Parish Commission to give appropriate acknowledgment and recognition to individuals and organizations who have rendered invaluable service in its behalf to the citizens of Caddo Parish; and

WHEREAS, such an individual, Mr. Leroy Powell, a beloved and lifelong member of the Queensborough community, was born on June 14, 1937, in Keatchie, Louisiana, to the late Hattie and Sam Powell; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Powell has shared a devoted 65-year marriage with his beloved wife Thelma, and together they have raised four children — Gerald (deceased), Faye, Vada, and Orlando — as well as nurturing a legacy that now includes numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Since December 1969, Mr. Powell has been a proud and dedicated resident of 2334 Stonewall Street in Queensborough, where, at the age of 87, he is affectionately known by his neighbors as the "Mayor of Stonewall Street"; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Powell has faithfully served as a member of William Memorial CME Temple for over 60 years, where he has held several leadership roles including President of the Usher Board and President of Ushers across more than 48 states; and

WHEREAS, His industrious spirit is reflected in a remarkable career that spans multiple decades and employers, including Big Chain Groceries (now Kroger), Holmes Rountree, LaVlave & Pitlings, and Sears Roebuck, where he served as a mechanic for 20 years before retiring; and

WHEREAS, even in retirement, Mr. Powell continued to serve his community by working with Dean's Automotive and later as a trusted School Crossing Guard for Caddo Parish Schools through the Shreveport Police Department; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that in recognition of his lifetime of service,

commitment to community, and enduring impact on all who know him, Stonewall Street is hereby dedicated in honor of Mr. Leroy Powell.

SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF REMEMBRANCE MARIAH CARTER UNDERWOOD

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission pauses with sadness and regret to reflect upon the passing of Mrs. Mariah Carter Underwood, who went to meet her heavenly Father on May 25, 2025;

WHEREAS, Mrs. Underwood, born on December 1, 1929, to Mr. and Mrs. Henderson Carter and Julia Small Carter, was instilled with a strong awareness of family and community, as well as a high regard for education, personal responsibility and achievement; and

WHEREAS, following high school, she obtained her Bachelor's in Elementary Education at Grambling State College and her Masters in Education and Learning Disability/Reading Education/Mental Retarded and worked in the Louisiana Public School System for over 40 years teaching children, specifically Special Needs children; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Underwood married the late Mr. Claude Underwood, who was a community activist and community leader; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Underwood may be best remembered for the love she had for her family—including her two children, Ocie B. Carter and Stephanie Owens, and her six grandchildren and her eleven great grandchildren—her heart of gold and her compassionate spirit. She was the glue that held her family together, and will be missed dearly; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish does hereby express its deepest regrets and a profound sense of loss at the passing of Mrs. Mariah Carter Underwood.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission does further convey to the family and friends of Mrs. Underwood its sincerest expressions of sympathy and consolation, and the prayer that they will be comforted in the knowledge of life that continues beyond this vale.

SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION EVENING WITH THE AUTHORS

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission recognizes the vital role literature and the arts play in enriching the cultural and intellectual life of our community and Parish; and

WHEREAS, the Mooretown Branch Library hosted "An Evening with the Authors" on May 2nd from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM, celebrating the power of storytelling and the written word; and

WHEREAS, this event, hosted by Dr. Darryl Gates and Marcus Persley, spotlighted the accomplishments and contributions of local and regional authors; and

WHEREAS, authors Eugenia James, Dr. Patricia Johnson, Dyani Allen, Dr. Tyrone Burton, and Melvin Lars were honored for their creative works and commitment to literature; and

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission commends Dr. Darryl Gates for his leadership and dedication to promoting literacy, education, and community engagement through this inspirational event;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, that it does hereby proclaim May 2nd, 2025 as:

"An Evening with the Authors Day"

in Caddo Parish and encourages all citizens to support local authors and celebrate the transformative power of reading and writing.

PROCLAMATION JUNETEENTH

WHEREAS, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation ending slavery in the Confederacy effective January 1, 1863; and

WHEREAS, the news that slavery had officially ended and that the slaves were free throughout the land now known as the United States was neither announced nor enforced in the western former Confederate states such as Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas in particular, until two and a half years after the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation due to a low presence of the Union Army in those

areas; and

WHEREAS, when Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, to establish the Union Army's command over Texas, he announced to the people of Texas on June 19, 1865, the end of slavery and the freedom of the slaves; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth serves as an extremely significant day of remembrance and acknowledgment of the history, freedom, culture, strength, perseverance, and achievement of the past, present, and future generations of the African American community; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth holds an important place not only in African American history, but in United States history for all Americans to reflect on, learn about, and appreciate the struggles, triumphs, and continued growth of our nation as a whole; and

WHEREAS, local communities throughout the United States, such as our home parish of Caddo Parish, support the significance of Juneteenth and all that it symbolizes in the history, memory, and culture of African American people, and the resulting societal impact that has reverberated to all people in our community and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission adopted Resolution 44 of 2020 to commit that Juneteenth Independence Day would be recognized and celebrated in perpetuity, followed by the passage and signing into law by President Joe Biden of a bill officially proclaiming Juneteenth as a national holiday in 2021; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission in legal session convened, that it does hereby recognize June 19th, 2025, as:

"Juneteenth"

in Caddo Parish, Louisiana, urging all citizens to join with the Caddo Parish Commission to celebrate the Juneteenth holiday.

PROCLAMATION BLACK MUSIC MONTH

WHEREAS, Black Music Month—celebrated annually in June—was established to recognize and celebrate the profound contributions of African American artists, composers, vocalists, producers, and innovators to music and culture in the United States and around the world; and

WHEREAS, Black music has served as the soundtrack to struggle and triumph, pain and joy, protest and praise—expressing the full depth and resilience of the African American experience; and

WHEREAS, Caddo Parish and the City of Shreveport have long been home to a rich legacy of Black musicians and performers whose work has helped define and elevate the genres of gospel, blues, jazz, soul, funk, hip hop, and rhythm and blues; and

WHEREAS, legendary artists such as Huddie "Lead Belly" Ledbetter, a Mooringsport native and iconic folk and blues pioneer is noted as one of the foundational influences on American musical tradition, and

WHEREAS, this level of influence would carry on through 60's soul legends like Brenton Wood, whose songs have found renewed viral success on social media, soul artist Margie Evans, and Estelle Brown of the Sweet Inspirations who has been inducted into the Graceland Hall of Fame for her legendary accompaniment of Elvis Presley carry on a musical legacy alongside modern artists like drummer/producer/manager Brady Blade, electronic trailblazer DJ Yoshi, rapper Hurricane Chris, country artist and Beyoncé collaborator Willie Jones, indie rock's genre defying AJ Haynes & the Seratones, and the living legend, Grammy awarded Jazz drummer Brian Blade.

WHEREAS Shreveport's own "Losing Boy," Eddy Giles (whose daughter Stephanie Lynch served on the Caddo Commission and Shreveport City Council) and Reuben Bell were among the artists to define and give birth to Southern Soul, a sound that would evolve in the hands of Quenn Echols, Crystal Thomas, Tanji Jefferson, Jeter Jones, P2k Dadiddy, Ronald Slack Jefferson, Ron Johnson, Sweet Nay, and many more Southern Soul artists who continue to make our community the heartbeat of this musical style.

WHEREAS, Shreveport's influence on black music isn't limited to recording artists, with modern tastemakers like founder, President and CEO of the National Association of Gospel Radio Charles Edward "CeJay" Johnson, Grammy nominated music video director for artists like Doja Cat and H.E.R., child., and cultural significance that ranges from rebellious movement like Ratchet City or the viral I.S.A. dance "Movin Like Bernie" to a strong musical culture that stands on a professional foundation of radio

personalities from Gay Poppa to Marvin “Jabber Jaws” Williams.

WHEREAS, Faith propelled many of these artists and Black musicians in Caddo Parish are deeply connected to Gospel and contemporary Christian music from classic acts like the Progressive Smith Brothers and Bettye Nelson to recent Grammy winning contemporary Christian singer songwriter Doe Jones and the Grammy awarded band that launched her musical journey, Forever Jones.

WHEREAS, generations of musicians nurtured in Caddo Parish churches, school bands, street corners, and clubs continue to innovate, inspire, and lead, sustaining the region’s status as a crucible of Black musical creativity and excellence;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, that it does hereby recognize June as Black Music Month in Caddo Parish and joins the nation in honoring the legacy, talent, and enduring influence of Black musicians, particularly those from our own communities, who have made lasting contributions to music and culture and the Commission encourages all citizens to celebrate and support Black music and musicians, and to reflect upon the vital role that music plays in the cultural and civic life of our parish.

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION
250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY ON JUNE 14**

WHEREAS, on June 14, 1775, the Second Continental Congress established the Continental Army, marking the birth of the United States Army and laying the foundation for the nation’s military defense; and

WHEREAS, for 250 years, the United States Army has steadfastly defended the Constitution, protected the nation’s freedoms, and served with honor and distinction in conflicts and missions both domestically and internationally; and

WHEREAS, the Army’s enduring values—loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage—have guided generations of Soldiers in their commitment to the nation; and

WHEREAS, Caddo Parish is home to numerous active-duty Soldiers, Army veterans, and their families, whose sacrifices and contributions have enriched our community and upheld the Army’s legacy; and

WHEREAS, the 250th anniversary of the United States Army provides an opportunity to reflect upon and honor the Army’s significant role in shaping the nation’s history and securing its future.

WHEREAS, Caddo Parish not only enjoys the freedoms of a nation protected by this institution, but is also proud to call itself home to many active, reservist and veteran soldiers of the United States Army including, Commissioner Ken Epperson, Sr., Commissioner Ronald Cothran, Commissioner Greg Young, and Commissioner Victor Thomas.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission in due, legal, and regular session convened, that it does hereby recognize and commemorate the 250th anniversary of the United States Army on June 14, 2025, and extends its deepest gratitude to all Soldiers, past and present, for their unwavering service and dedication.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution will be made a part of the permanent records of Caddo Parish and be transmitted to the United States Army’s 355th Medical Company, the South Shreveport Recruiting Station, the local US Army Reserve and other local military organizations to express the Commission’s appreciation and support.

**PROCLAMATION
MEN’S HEALTH MONTH**

WHEREAS, despite advances in medical technology and research, men continue to live an average of five years less than women with Native American and African-American men having the lowest life expectancy; and

WHEREAS, educating the public and health care providers about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and early detection of male health problems will result in reducing rates of mortality from disease; and

WHEREAS, men who are educated about the value that preventive health can play in prolonging their lifespan and their role as productive family members will be more likely to participate in health screenings; and

WHEREAS, fathers who maintain a healthy lifestyle are role models for their children and have happier, healthier children; and

WHEREAS, Men's Health Network worked with Congress to develop a national men's health awareness period as a special campaign to help educate men, boys, and their families about the importance of positive health attitudes and preventative health practices; and

WHEREAS, the Men's Health Month web site has been established at www.MensHealthMonth.org and features resources, proclamations, and information about awareness events and activities, including Wear Blue for Men's Health (www.WearBlueForMensHealth.com); and

WHEREAS, Men's Health Month will focus on a broad range of men's health issues, including heart disease, mental health, diabetes, and prostate, testicular and colon cancer; and

WHEREAS, the residents of this city are encouraged to increase awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, regular exercise, and medical check-ups.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, meeting in legal and regular session this 5th day of June, 2025, that it does hereby proclaim June, 2025 as:

MEN'S HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

in Caddo Parish, LA and encourage all our residents to pursue preventative health practices and early detection efforts.

PROCLAMATION ALZHEIMER'S & BRAIN HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

WHEREAS, Alzheimer's disease is a progressive disease of the brain causing deterioration in memory, reasoning, motor skills, and the ability to take care of oneself. The impact of Alzheimer's on individuals, families, and our health care system makes the disease one of our nation's primary medical, social, and fiscal challenges; and

WHEREAS, Alzheimer's affects every level of society. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention: every sixty-six seconds, someone in the United States develops the disease; more than 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's; and Alzheimer's is the 6th leading cause of death, and it kills more than breast and prostate cancer combined; and

WHEREAS, Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia, and the social, emotional, and financial impacts of dementia are felt by everyone—persons with dementia, their families, caregivers, and communities; and

WHEREAS, there is more than 18.1 billion hours of unpaid care per year by caregivers, resulting in Alzheimer's and other dementias causing a negative economic impact, costing the nation approximately \$236 billion; and

WHEREAS, currently, there are no treatments that can prevent, delay, or reverse Alzheimer's disease & stigma leads many people with dementia, and their families, to fear exclusion and differential treatment, preventing them from seeking help and disclosing their diagnosis; and

WHEREAS, early detection provides individuals and families to adjust to the diagnosis and plan for the future; and all Caddo Parish citizens need to be better informed about Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia and to work to create more supportive and inclusive communities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, that it does hereby proclaim June 2025 as:

'National Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month'

in Caddo Parish, Louisiana, and urges all citizens to join with the Parish in recognition of this important month and urges citizens and organizations to educate themselves about Alzheimer's, Dementia and other Brain diseases.

PROCLAMATION NATIONAL CANCER SURVIVORS DAY

WHEREAS, National Cancer Survivors Day is observed annually on the first Sunday in June to honor and celebrate the lives of millions of people who have faced a cancer diagnosis and continue to live with courage, strength, and hope; and

WHEREAS, cancer survivors are living testaments to the progress made in cancer

detection, treatment, and research, and their stories offer hope and inspiration to those who are newly diagnosed and to families, caregivers, and medical professionals alike; and

WHEREAS, this day also serves as a reminder that life after cancer can be rewarding and productive, and that those living with cancer deserve continued access to medical care, emotional support, and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, Caddo Parish is home to countless survivors whose resilience and determination have inspired our community, as well as to healthcare professionals, nonprofits, and advocacy organizations that provide essential services, support groups, education, and hope to individuals and families affected by cancer; and

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission stands in solidarity with cancer survivors and their loved ones, and acknowledges the importance of continued research, education, and advocacy in the fight to end cancer for all;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, that it does hereby recognize June 1st, 2025, as:

“Cancer Survivor’s Day”

in Caddo Parish, Louisiana, and honors all cancer survivors for their courage, determination, and perseverance with a special knowing recognition to those within our own organization who are survivors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Caddo Parish Commission expresses its deep appreciation for the caregivers, medical providers, and advocates who walk alongside survivors every day and reaffirms its commitment to supporting awareness, resources, and initiatives that advance the health and well-being of all Caddo Parish residents impacted by cancer.

**PROCLAMATION
PTSD AWARENESS MONTH**

WHEREAS, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that can affect anyone who has experienced or witnessed a traumatic event, including survivors of abuse, accidents, natural disasters, serious illness, and combat; and

WHEREAS, PTSD Awareness Month is observed nationally each June to raise public awareness about PTSD, reduce stigma, and promote access to effective treatment and support for individuals living with trauma; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that approximately 12 million adults in the United States suffer from PTSD each year, including a significant number of veterans, first responders, and frontline workers who serve our nation and communities; and

WHEREAS, Caddo Parish is home to many brave men and women—military personnel, veterans, law enforcement officers, emergency responders, healthcare professionals, and civilians—whose experiences place them at greater risk for PTSD and who deserve compassion, understanding, and comprehensive care; and

WHEREAS, early identification, public education, and accessible mental health services are essential to improving outcomes for those living with PTSD and their families; and

WHEREAS, by raising awareness, we affirm our commitment to supporting mental wellness, breaking the silence surrounding trauma, and honoring the resilience of those affected;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, that it does hereby proclaim the month of June as PTSD Awareness Month in Caddo Parish and encourages all citizens to increase their understanding of PTSD and support efforts to improve mental health and trauma-informed care in our community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Caddo Parish Commission extends its gratitude to the healthcare professionals, counselors, service organizations, and advocates who work tirelessly to support individuals affected by PTSD and promote healing and hope throughout our parish.

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION
DJ YOSHI**

WHEREAS, Caddo Parish is home to vibrant culture, rich traditions, and dynamic individuals whose talents elevate our region onto national and international stages; and

WHEREAS, among these creative forces stands DJ Hot Boy Yoshi, a trailblazing DJ, entertainer, and cultural ambassador whose electrifying performances and community engagement have made him a household name and an unwavering symbol of Shreveport/Caddo Parish pride; and

WHEREAS, DJ Yoshi has been a featured talent at numerous hallmark events, including: The Red River Revel, where he championed the intersection of music and community; Rock the Clock, Louisiana’s premier New Year’s celebration; The prestigious Independence Bowl, highlighting his presence on one of Louisiana’s most cherished sports stages; Serving as the Official DJ for the 2023 Louisiana Prize Fest, celebrating innovation across film, music, food, and fashion; Hosting the 49th Annual Bayou Classic Battle of the Bands and Greek Show; and Gracing the stages of the iconic Essence Festival; and Bringing joy and spirit to the Shreveport Regional Arts Council’s Christmas in the Sky; and

WHEREAS, DJ Yoshi’s influence has expanded well beyond local and state lines, having been personally selected by the New Orleans Super Bowl Host Committee to DJ at events for Super Bowl LIX, performing for legendary figures such as Deion “Prime Time” Sanders at his Birthday Celebration, and sharing stages with icons including Frankie Beverly & Maze, Mary J. Blige, Mike Epps, Big Freedia, Rickey Smiley, DJ Jubilee, Jagged Edge, Cedric The Entertainer, 112, and Big X the Plug; and

WHEREAS, he has also joined major national tours such as Rick Ross’s Black Market Tour and Tracy McGrady’s OBL Basketball Tour, and continues to light up events from Highland Mardi Gras Parades to nonprofit fundraisers such as Artini (Bossier Arts Council) and the Louisiana Association for the Blind’s EyeBall; and

WHEREAS, beyond his professional accolades, DJ Yoshie embraces the roles that matter most—Brother, Husband, Son, and Father—and takes greatest pride in being dad to his daughter Kaira, an honor student, literary arts writer, and cheerleader whose achievements echo her father’s dedication and drive.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Caddo Parish Commission does hereby recognize and honor DJ Hot Boy Yoshi for his outstanding contributions to arts, entertainment, and community advancement. His charisma, commitment, and cultural leadership serve as a beacon of inspiration—embodying the spirit, rhythm, and resilience of Shreveport, Caddo Parish, and Northwest Louisiana.

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION
LSUS PILOTS BASEBALL TEAM**

WHEREAS, the Louisiana State University at Shreveport (LSUS) Pilots Baseball Team has achieved an unprecedented milestone in collegiate sports by completing a perfect 59-0 season, culminating in their first-ever NAIA Baseball National Championship; and

WHEREAS, this historic accomplishment marks the first time in the history of college baseball at any level that a team has finished a season undefeated, solidifying the Pilots’ place in the annals of sports history; and

WHEREAS, under the exceptional leadership of Head Coach Brad Neffendorf, the Pilots demonstrated remarkable skill and determination, overcoming a 4-0 deficit in the championship game to secure a 13-7 victory over Southeastern University; and

WHEREAS, the team’s dominance was evident throughout the season, leading the nation in a .361 batting average, 11.3 runs per game, 76 home runs, a 2.38 ERA, and a .982 fielding percentage; and

WHEREAS, Individual Pilots players received recognition for the parts they played in this historic season as the 2025 Avista NAIA World Series All-Tournament Team included 5 Pilots players: Third baseman Josh Gibson, catcher Diego Aragon, outfielder Ian Montz, and pitchers Isaac Rohde and Draven Ziegler; and Rohde was also named Most Valuable Player, Cooper Huspen, was received the Hustle Award, and Jose Sallorin the earned the Gold Glove Award.

WHEREAS, the Pilots’ extraordinary performance has brought immense pride to the LSUS community, the City of Shreveport, and Caddo Parish, serving as an inspiration to athletes and fans alike; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission that it does hereby celebrates and commemorates the historic achievements of the 2025 LSUS Pilots Baseball Team, recognizing their perfect season and national championship as a testament to excellence, perseverance, and teamwork.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission extends its heartfelt congratulations to Head Coach Brad Neffendorf, the coaching staff, players, and all those who contributed to this remarkable

season.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution will be made part of the permanent record of Caddo Parish and a copy of this resolution shall be presented at the LSUS Pilot Citywide Celebration on June 1, 2025.

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF REMEMBRANCE
REV. CLEONIS ODOM**

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission pauses to remember and honor the life of Reverend Cleonis Odom, a devoted spiritual leader, community servant, and beloved resident of Caddo Parish, whose passing marks the loss of a remarkable and faithful man whose legacy will endure in the lives he touched; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Cleonis Odom served with unwavering dedication as a minister of the Gospel, offering wisdom, comfort, and hope to countless souls through his preaching, teaching, and spiritual leadership across many years of service to God and community; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Odom was known not only for his powerful sermons and deep understanding of the Word, but also for his compassion, humility, and ability to meet people where they were— lifting spirits, building bridges, and modeling a life of grace and integrity; and

WHEREAS, beyond the pulpit, Reverend Odom was an advocate for education, family, and social justice, using his voice and influence to promote peace, equity, and opportunity for all, especially within the African American community of Caddo Parish; and

WHEREAS, his wisdom and presence were felt not only within his church congregation but also in neighborhoods, civic groups, and among generations of families who looked to him as a father figure, counselor, and friend; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Cleonis Odom leaves behind a lasting impact through his ministry, his example of servant-leadership, and the countless lives he shaped through faith, encouragement, and love;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, that it does hereby extend its heartfelt condolences to the family, congregation, and loved ones of Reverend Cleonis Odom, and commemorates his life of purpose and service with deep gratitude and admiration.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be presented to his family as a token of the Commission's respect and remembrance, and that his legacy of faith, community, and leadership be forever honored in the history of Caddo Parish.

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF REMEMBRANCE
DANNY WILLIAMS**

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission pauses to remember and honor the life of Pastor Danny Williams, a devoted spiritual leader, community servant, and beloved resident of Caddo Parish, whose passing marks the loss of a remarkable and faithful man whose legacy will endure in the lives he touched; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Danny Williams, served with unwavering dedication as a minister of the Gospel, offering wisdom, comfort, and hope to countless souls through his preaching, teaching, and spiritual leadership across many years of service to God and community; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Williams was known not only for his powerful sermons and deep understanding of the Word, but also for his compassion, humility, and ability to meet people where they were—lifting spirits, building bridges, and modeling a life of grace and integrity; and

WHEREAS, beyond the pulpit, Pastor Williams was an advocate for education, family, and social justice, using his voice and influence to promote peace, equity, and opportunity for all, especially within the African American community of Caddo Parish; and

WHEREAS, his wisdom and presence were felt not only within his church congregation but also in neighborhoods, civic groups, and among generations of families who looked to him as a father figure, counselor, and friend; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Williams leaves behind a lasting impact through his ministry, his example of servant-leadership, and the countless lives he shaped through faith, encouragement, and love;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, that it does

hereby extend its heartfelt condolences to the family, congregation, and loved ones of Pastor Danny Williams and commemorates his life of purpose and service with deep gratitude and admiration.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be presented to his family as a token of the Commission's respect and remembrance, and that his legacy of faith, community, and leadership be forever honored in the history of Caddo Parish.

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mr. Jones, *that Special Resolution of Recognition Pride Month.*

Mr. Thomas gave the following statement regarding this issue:

I rise today in support of legislation that acknowledges Pride Month in Caddo Parish, not as a political statement, but as a reflection of our shared humanity and the values of dignity, respect, and inclusion that every citizen deserves. Some have referenced Scripture in opposition to this recognition, pointing to verses from Leviticus or other parts of the Old Testament. And I want to say clearly: I am no stranger to the Word. I grew up in church. I still walk daily with Christ. And because of that walk, I've spent time wrestling with Scripture—not to weaponize it, but to understand it more deeply. The Old Testament gives us many laws. Some of them are severe. Some are difficult to reconcile with how we live today. According to those same texts, touching the skin of a dead pig is considered unclean—yet on any given Sunday in Louisiana, we cheer for our favorite team as they play football, which is made from just that. Other laws prohibit trimming your beard, wearing mixed fabrics, or eating shrimp and pork. Yet many of us, myself included, have enjoyed a good barbecue or lined up for gumbo, not fearing eternal consequence. What this teaches us is not that the law is wrong, but that it was written for a people in a particular time, under a theocracy, not a democracy, and that it pointed forward to something greater. That "greater" is Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I have not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it." He walked among outcasts. He sat with the marginalized. He challenged the self-righteous and stood with the oppressed. And ultimately, He gave His life, not for some sins, but for all sin. That includes mine. That includes yours. That includes everyone. Because of Him, I strive to lead with compassion. Because of Him, I believe in extending grace to others just as I have received it. And because of Him, I cannot stand silent when members of our community are dismissed, devalued, or denied recognition of their humanity. This resolution does not call anyone to change their beliefs, abandon their faith, or compromise their convictions. It simply says that the people of Caddo Parish see our LGBTQ+ neighbors, and we choose to treat them with the respect every human being deserves. To affirm someone's dignity is not to deny God. In fact, I believe it is to reflect Him more fully. I have no desire to allow fear mongering to have rise, and that fear has had already had consequences. In our own backyard, here in Caddo Parish, transgender women have been murdered simply for being who they are. I want to pause and honor their memory:

- *Pooh Johnson, a beloved 25-year-old makeup artist.*
- *Brooklyn DeShauna Smith, a 20-year-old cosmetology student with a bright future.*
- *Vontashia Bell, just 18 years old when her life was taken.*
- *Valerie "Ms. Val" McKinney, a woman who deserved to grow old with dignity.*
- *Terry Golston and Freddy Henderson, whose names we say today to ensure they are not forgotten.*

So, as we enter Pride Month, let us remember: Jesus taught us to love our neighbor. Not just the easy neighbor. Not just the one who looks like us or believes like us. But every neighbor. And as a man of faith, I believe that kind of love is the foundation of righteous leadership. Allow me to invoke the courage of Ms. Pamela Raintree when she boldly proclaimed to the city council in 2011 that he who has not sinned, I welcome you to take this stone and cast it upon me first.

At this time, Mr. Thomas' motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Blake, Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (9). NAYS: Commissioners Atkins, Kracman, and Lazarus (3). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION PRIDE MONTH

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission is pleased to extend appropriate recognition to organizations which strive to make a positive impact on our community; and

WHEREAS, equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination are among the basic,

inalienable rights of every person, necessary for the development and exercise of our most vital capacities and preconditions of human flourishing; and

WHEREAS, our nation was founded upon and is guided by a set of principles that includes every person has been created equal and that they have the right to the pursuit of happiness and that each shall be accorded the full recognition and protection of law; and

WHEREAS, Caddo Parish has become stronger by the rich diversity of its residents, all of which contribute to the vibrant character of our parish and illustrate the vastness of the range of human experience; and

WHEREAS, Caddo Parish is home to PACE, People Acting for Change and Equality, an organization of individuals working to ensure the full and equal recognition and protection of the fundamental rights of the LGBT people and their families; and

WHEREAS, PACE was instrumental in crafting and passage of Shreveport's Fairness Ordinances in 2014 banning discrimination based on race, sex, disability, age, ancestry, national origin, political or religious identification, gender identity and sexual orientation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED, by the President of the Caddo Parish Commission that June 2025 is recognized as:

'PRIDE MONTH'

in Caddo Parish, Louisiana, extending to all appreciation and gratitude for their service to this country, state and parish for its efforts to focus the attention of the community upon those individuals and to their cause, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all residents are encouraged to celebrate the progress within our culture towards justice, equality and full civic recognition for all Caddo residents.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT

- Job Corps

Mrs. Bryant said that they have reached out to Job Corps and offered assistance. Mrs. Gage-Watts thanked Administration for working on this matter. Mr. Epperson said that this directive came from Washington, D.C. and encouraged all to reach out to their Congress people to express their concerns regarding the closure to Job Corps.

- Intergovernmental Meeting

Mrs. Bryant announced that the Intergovernmental Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 25.

COMMUNIQUES & COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Mr. Epperson asked about the traffic monitors that were installed all over Caddo Parish. Mr. Brandon Bradford, Public Works, said that those cameras were installed by DOTOD to monitor traffic patterns and will be taken down by the end of June. He also mentioned that the cameras only track traffic counts.

Mr. Epperson also brought up concerns regarding freshly paved roads being ruined by natural gas and oil trucks. Mr. Bradford said that the oil companies will reimburse Caddo for road repairs.

He also invited everyone to tune into his Grassroots Forum teleconference call on Thursday, June 12 at 8:00 a.m.

- Mr. Cothran wished all of the fathers a Happy Father's Day.
- Mr. Burrell requested information regarding a flooding situation in his neighborhood.

He also announced that BizCamp will be working with 50 Cent and G-Unit Foundation for the collaboration.

- Mr. Thomas announced several community events in his district, including SocialCon, Field Gay, and the International Rose & Wine Festival.

- Mr. Jones reminded everyone that Common Ground Community needs proteins to stock their food pantry.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Mrs. Gage-Watts talked briefly about their recent trip to NOBCO and more information will be forthcoming.

PUBLIC HEARING ON ORDINANCES

President Gage-Watts opened the public hearing on the following ordinances:

- *Ordinance No. 6535 of 2025, 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 2025 on all the property subject to taxation in the Parish of Caddo, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6536 of 2025, 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 2025 on all the property subject to taxation in the Parish of Caddo, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6537 of 2025, an ordinance setting the Parish Millage for the purpose of paying principal and interest, due in 2025, on outstanding Parish bond issues and to instruct the Assessor to include said millage on the tax roll of the Parish of Caddo for the year 2025, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6538 of 2025, an ordinance setting the assessment of property classified as timberlands and to instruct the Assessor to include said assessment on the tax roll of the Parish of Caddo for the year 2025, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6539 of 2025, an ordinance to adopt the values fixed, or to be fixed, by the Louisiana Tax Commission on all assessment for railways and other public service corporations, and to instruct the Assessor to extend such assessments and values on the tax roll of the Parish of Caddo for the year 2025, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6545 of 2025, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Oil & Gas and Economic Development Funds to appropriate funds for Skywest Airlines*
- *Ordinance No. 6546 of 2025, an ordinance declaring certain adjudicated properties to be surplus and to authorize the Parish Administrator, or a designee, to sell the Parish of Caddo’s tax interest in certain surplus adjudicated properties and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

There being no one to speak in favor, or against, the ordinances, the President closed the public hearing.

ORDINANCES (for final passage)

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mr. Cothran *that the following ordinances be adopted:*

- *Ordinance No. 6535 of 2025, 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 2025 on all the property subject to taxation in the Parish of Caddo, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6537 of 2025, an ordinance setting the Parish Millage for the purpose of paying principal and interest, due in 2025, on outstanding Parish bond issues and to instruct the Assessor to include said millage on the tax roll of the Parish of Caddo for the year 2025, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6538 of 2025, an ordinance setting the assessment of property classified as timberlands and to instruct the Assessor to include said assessment on the tax roll of the Parish of Caddo for the year 2025, and to otherwise provide*

with respect thereto

- *Ordinance No. 6539 of 2025, an ordinance to adopt the values fixed, or to be fixed, by the Louisiana Tax Commission on all assessment for railways and other public service corporations, and to instruct the Assessor to extend such assessments and values on the tax roll of the Parish of Caddo for the year 2025, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

Mr. Cothran asked for a brief summary of the millages. Mrs. Bryant explained that Ordinance No. 6536 increases the millages to the maximum voter-authorized rate. For a \$250k home, it would be an additional \$82 per year, if this ordinance were to pass. She said that the increase is intended to fund criminal justice system needs.

Mrs. Bryant also explained that Ordinance No. 6535 maintains the current levels.

At this time, Mr. Thomas’ motion carried unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 6535 OF 2025

BY THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION:

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 2025 ON ALL THE PROPERTY SUBJECT TO TAXATION IN THE PARISH OF CADDO, AND TO OTHERWISE PROVIDE WITH RESPECT THERETO

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the Caddo Parish Commission (the “Commission”) acting as the governing authority of Caddo Parish, Louisiana (the “Parish”), to levy various taxes for the year 2025; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to adjust the Parish millages as a result of the quadrennial reappraisal and valuation of the property subject to taxation within the Parish, in proportion to the increase in the 2025 taxable assessed valuation of the Parish;

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held by the Commission on the subject of the proposed millage adjustment in accordance with the open meetings law and the additional requirements of Article VII, Section 23(C) of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974 and LA R.S. 47:1705(B).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, in due, legal and regular session convened, that the following general purpose and special millages (that is, fractional mills on the dollar) on the assessed valuation of all property subject to taxation in the whole of Caddo Parish, Louisiana be and the same are hereby levied at the following adjusted rates for the year 2025, in accordance with Article VII, Section 23(C) of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974 and LA R.S. 47:1705, as applicable:

	2025 Adjusted Millage Rate
General:	
General Alimony - For all property lying outside of cities and towns, as described below	5.89 mills
Exempted Municipalities - For all property lying within the confines of incorporated cities and towns having a population in excess of 1,000 and which maintain a system of street paving and those being Shreveport, Vivian and Bossier City	2.94 mills
Special Purpose:	
Public Health:	
For the creation and support of public health centers in the parish	.83 mills
For the maintenance and operation of public health centers in the Parish and portion rededicated for payment of mandatory costs of the criminal justice system	1.30 mills

Shreve Memorial Library:

For the acquiring, equipping, construction, improving,
maintaining and operating the public library system 4.74 mills

For the maintenance and operation of parish library
facilities and portion rededicated to payment of mandatory
costs of the criminal justice system 4.66 mills

Juvenile Court:

For the maintenance and operation for the juvenile court,
and juvenile detention home facilities 1.88 mills

Detention Facilities:

For the maintenance and operation of detention facilities
and portion rededicated for payment of mandatory costs of
the criminal justice system 5.52 mills

Courthouse Maintenance:

For the maintenance and operation of parish courthouse
and other building facilities 2.59 mills

Public Works:

For the maintenance and operation of road, bridge,
drainage, garbage collection, and mandatory costs of the
criminal justice system 5.96 mills

Public Facilities:

For the maintenance and operation of public facilities,
specifically road and bridge, parks and recreation,
garbage collection and drainage .80 mills

Biomedical Research:

For the promotion of economic development through
the Biomedical Research Foundation of Northwest
Louisiana and portion rededicated to mandatory costs
of the criminal justice system 1.68 mills

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that the Commission Clerk shall give notice of this ordinance to the Assessor of Caddo Parish, Louisiana, and instruct him to levy and assess each tax as set forth herein for the year 2025, and the tax collector of Caddo Parish, Louisiana shall collect and remit the same to said taxing authority in accordance with law.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that if any provision or item of this ordinance or the application thereof is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, items or applications which can be given effect without the invalid provisions, items or applications, and to this end, the provisions of this ordinance are hereby declared severable.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that this ordinance shall take effect ten (10) days after publication in the official journal.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that all ordinances or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

ORDINANCE NO. 6537 OF 2025

BY THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION:

AN ORDINANCE SETTING THE PARISH MILLAGE FOR THE PURPOSE OF PAYING PRINCIPAL AND INTEREST, DUE IN 2025 ON OUTSTANDING PARISH BOND ISSUES AND TO INSTRUCT THE ASSESSOR TO INCLUDE SAID MILLAGE ON THE TAX ROLL OF THE PARISH OF CADDO FOR THE YEAR 2025, AND TO OTHERWISE PROVIDE WITH RESPECT THERETO

WHEREAS, on August 1, 2007, the Parish of Caddo issued general obligation bonds in

the total aggregate sum of \$10,000,000; and

WHEREAS, on August 1, 2008, the Parish of Caddo issued general obligation bonds in the total aggregate sum of \$10,000,000; and

WHEREAS, on September 17, 2009, the Parish of Caddo issued general obligation bonds in the total aggregate sum of \$10,000,000; and

WHEREAS, on May 15, 2015, the Parish of Caddo sold Refunding Bonds in the total aggregate sum of \$6,850,000; and

WHEREAS, on February 25, 2015 the Parish of Caddo sold Refunding Bonds in the total aggregate sum of \$6,345,000; and

WHEREAS, on May 19, 2016 the Parish of Caddo sold Refunding Bonds in the total aggregate sum of \$7,250,000; and

WHEREAS, on March 29, 2023 the Parish of Caddo issued general obligation bonds in the total aggregate sum of \$20,000,000; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to levy a millage tax for the year 2025 in order to pay the principal and interest on said bonds, which will fall due in the year 2025.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, in due, legal, and regular session convened, that a special tax of 1.5 mills on the dollar on assessed valuation of all property subject to taxation within the whole of Caddo Parish, Louisiana, be and the same is hereby levied for the year 2025, for the purpose of paying principal and interest which will become due in the year 2025 on the aforesaid public improvement bonds and refunding bonds.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that the Commission Clerk shall give notice of this ordinance to the Assessor of Caddo Parish, Louisiana, and instruct him to levy and assess each tax as set forth herein for the year 2025.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that if any provision or item of this ordinance or the application thereof is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, items or applications which can be given effect without the invalid provisions, items or applications, and to this end, the provisions of this ordinance are hereby declared severable.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that this ordinance shall take effect ten (10) days after publication in the official journal.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that all ordinances or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

ORDINANCE NO. 6538 OF 2025

BY THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION:

AN ORDINANCE SETTING THE ASSESSMENT OF PROPERTY CLASSIFIED AS TIMBERLANDS AND TO INSTRUCT THE ASSESSOR TO INCLUDE SAID ASSESSMENT ON THE TAX ROLL OF THE PARISH OF CADDO FOR THE YEAR 2025, AND TO OTHERWISE PROVIDE WITH RESPECT THERETO

BE IT ORDAINED, by the Caddo Parish Commission in due, legal, and regular session convened, that the Tax Assessor of Caddo Parish be authorized and instructed to assess property in Caddo Parish, classified as timberlands at eight cents (\$.08) per acre for the year 2025.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that, the Commission Clerk shall give notice of this ordinance to the Assessor of Caddo Parish, Louisiana, and instruct him to levy and assess the applicable tax, at the above stated rate, upon these values as set forth herein for the year 2025.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that if any provision or item of this ordinance or the application thereof is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions; items or applications which can be given effect without the invalid provisions, items or applications, and to this end, the provisions of this ordinance are hereby declared severable.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that this ordinance shall take effect ten (10) days after publication in the official journal.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that all ordinances or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

ORDINANCE NO. 6539 OF 2025

BY THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION:

AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE VALUES FIXED, OR TO BE FIXED BY THE LOUISIANA TAX COMMISSION ON ALL ASSESSMENTS FOR RAILWAYS AND OTHER PUBLIC SERVICE CORPORATIONS, AND TO INSTRUCT THE ASSESSOR TO EXTEND SUCH ASSESSMENTS AND VALUES ON THE TAX ROLL OF THE PARISH OF CADDO FOR THE YEAR 2025, AND TO OTHERWISE PROVIDE WITH RESPECT THERETO

BE IT ORDAINED, by the Caddo Parish Commission in due, legal, and regular session convened, that the Caddo Parish Commission hereby adopts any and all assessments covering property owned by railways, tank car lines, and other public service corporations, and that the values named, fixed and reported be accepted and adopted as the values for all Parish purposes.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that the Commission Clerk shall give notice of this ordinance to the Assessor of Caddo Parish, Louisiana, and instruct him to levy and assess each applicable tax millage upon these values as set forth herein for the year 2025.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that if any provision or item of this ordinance or the application thereof is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, items, or applications which can be given effect without the invalid provisions, items or applications, and to this end, the provisions of this ordinance are hereby declared severable.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that this ordinance shall take effect ten (10) days after publication in the official journal.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that all ordinances or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mr. Epperson, *that Ordinance No. 6536 of 2025, 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 2025 on all the property subject to taxation in the Parish of Caddo, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be adopted.

Mr. J. Young said that Ordinance No. 6536 of 2025 increases millages to the maximum rate authorized by the voters. This increase is address jail overcrowding, inmate medical costs, juvenile justice resources, and other related criminal justice issues. He also mentioned that the public allowed the Commission to charge this amount. Public safety needs to be restored, he said.

Mr. Cothran wanted to know how long it has been since the Commission has raised the rates to the maximum allowed rate. Mrs. Bryant explained that the reassessments are done every four years. The last time this was done in 2001. A financial plan was presented to the Commission to help address criminal justice issues.

Mr. G. Young wanted to know how much this would generate. Mrs. Bryant said that this would generate approximately \$700k, but they expect this number to grow due to new properties being added to the rolls.

Mr. Atkins said that any time the underlying value of the properties increase, revenues increase as well. Mrs. Bryant explained that an individual taxpayer who has maintained their homes since 2001 should not have seen an increase from the Parish. She also said that the costs of projects have double, and so have the materials.

Call for the Question by Mr. Epperson, seconded by Mr. Jones. Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Kracman, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (11). NAYS: Commissioner Lazarus (1). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

At this time, Mr. Thomas' motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (8).

NAYS: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Kracman, and Lazarus (4). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

ORDINANCE NO. 6536 OF 2025

BY THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION:

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 2025 ON ALL THE PROPERTY SUBJECT TO TAXATION IN THE PARISH OF CADDO, AND TO OTHERWISE PROVIDE WITH RESPECT THERETO

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the Caddo Parish Commission (the “Commission”) acting as the governing authority of Caddo Parish, Louisiana (the “Parish”), to levy various taxes for the year 2025; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to adjust the Parish millages as a result of the quadrennial reappraisal and valuation of the property subject to taxation within the Parish, in proportion to the increase in the 2025 taxable assessed valuation of the Parish;
WHEREAS, a public hearing was held by the Commission on the subject of the proposed millage adjustment in accordance with the open meetings law and the additional requirements of Article VII, Section 23(C) of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974 and LA R.S. 47:1705(B).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, in due, legal and regular session convened, that the following general purpose and special millages (that is, fractional mills on the dollar) on the assessed valuation of all property subject to taxation in the whole of Caddo Parish, Louisiana be and the same are hereby levied at the following increased millage rate no in excess of prior years maximum rates for the year 2025, in accordance with Article VII, Section 23(C) of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974 and LA R.S. 47:1705, as applicable:

	2025 Adjusted Millage Rate	Levy Rate
General:		
General Alimony- For all property lying outside of Cities and towns, as described below	5.89 mills	6.13 mills
Exempted Municipalities- For all property lying within the confines of incorporated cities and towns having a population in excess of 1,000 and which maintain a system of street paving and those being Shreveport, Vivian, and Bossier City	2.94 mills	3.06 mills
Special Purpose:		
Public Health:		
For the creation and support of public health centers in the Parish	.83 mills	.87 mills
For the maintenance and operation of public health centers in the Parish and portion rededicated for payment of mandatory costs of the criminal justice system	1.30 mills	1.30 mills
Shreve Memorial Library:		
For the acquiring, equipping, construction, improving, maintaining, and operating the public library system	4.74 mills	4.74 mills
For the maintenance and operation of parish library facilities and portion rededicated to payment of mandatory costs of the criminal justice system	4.66 mills	4.66 mills
Juvenile Court:		
For the maintenance and operation for the juvenile court, and juvenile detention home facilities	1.88 mills	1.97 mills

Detention Facilities:

For the maintenance and operation of detention facilities and portion rededicated for payment of mandatory costs of the criminal justice system	5.52 mills	5.52 mills
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Courthouse Maintenance:

For the maintenance and operation of parish courthouse and other building facilities	2.59 mills	2.72 mills
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Public Works:

For the maintenance and operation of road, bridge, drainage, garbage collection, and mandatory costs of the criminal justice system	5.96 mills	5.96 mills
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Public Facilities:

For the maintenance and operation of public facilities, specifically road and bridge, parks and recreation, garbage collection and drainage	.80 mills	.84 mills
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Biomedical Research:

For the promotion of economic development through the Biomedical Research Foundation of Northwest Louisiana and portion rededicated to mandatory costs of the criminal justice system	1.68 mills	1.76 mills
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BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that the Commission Clerk shall give notice of this ordinance to the Assessor of Caddo Parish, Louisiana, and instruct him to levy and assess each tax as set forth herein for the year 2025, and the tax collector of Caddo Parish, Louisiana shall collect and remit the same to said taxing authority in accordance with law.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that if any provision or item of this ordinance or the application thereof is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, items or applications which can be given effect without the invalid provisions, items or applications, and to this end, the provisions of this ordinance are hereby declared severable.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that this ordinance shall take effect ten (10) days after publication in the official journal.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that all ordinances or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mr. J. Young, *to englobo and adopt the following ordinances:*

- Ordinance No. 6545 of 2025, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Oil & Gas and Economic Development Funds to appropriate funds for Skywest Airlines*
- Ordinance No. 6546 of 2025, an ordinance declaring certain adjudicated properties to be surplus and to authorize the Parish Administrator, or a designee, to sell the Parish of Caddo’s tax interest in certain surplus adjudicated properties and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

Mrs. Gage-Watts spoke in favor of Ordinance No. 6545 of 2025 and said that Skywest is already interviewing for jobs.

At this time, Mr. Thomas’ motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Lazarus, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (11). NAYS: Commissioner Kracman (1). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

ORDINANCE NO. 6545 OF 2025

BY CADDO PARISH COMMISSION:

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET OF ESTIMATED REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE OIL AND GAS FUND AND THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND TO PROVIDE AN APPROPRIATION OF \$250,000 FOR SKYWEST AIRLINES, AND TO OTHERWISE PROVIDE WITH RESPECT THERETO

WHEREAS, SkyWest Airlines operates through partnerships with United Airlines, Delta Airlines, American Airlines and Alaska Airlines carrying over 42 million passengers in 2024; and

WHEREAS, SkyWest Airlines is headquartered in St. George, Utah with a fleet of over 500 aircrafts connecting passengers to 262 destinations throughout North America; and

WHEREAS, SkyWest Airlines, the nation's largest regional airline carrier, has selected Shreveport Regional Airport as its newest maintenance base and facility to help support its fleet; and

WHEAREAS, the SkyWest facility is expected to create 150 direct new jobs with an average annual salary of \$70,000 as well as an estimate of an additional 375 indirect jobs, bringing a total potential of new jobs to 525; and

WHEREAS, the Parish of Caddo would like to appropriate \$250,000 to SkyWest Airlines as part of the incentive package offered for locating at the Shreveport Regional Airport; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to amend the 2025 Budget in order to transfer \$250,000 from the Oil and Gas Fund to the Economic Development Fund to provide an appropriation for SkyWest Airlines.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Caddo Parish Commission in due, legal and regular session convened, that the Budget of Estimated Revenues and Expenditures for the Oil and Gas Fund and the Economic Development for the year 2025 are hereby amended as follows:

	<u>Budget Increase (Decrease)</u>
Oil and Gas Fund:	
Other Financing Sources (Uses)	
Transfer to Economic Development	\$ 250,000
Fund Balance	\$(250,000)
Economic Development:	
Allocation to Other Entities	
SkyWest Airlines	\$ 250,000
Other Financing Sources (Uses)	
Transfer from Oil and Gas Fund	\$ 250,000

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that if any provision or item of this ordinance or the application thereof is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, items or applications which can be given effect without the invalid provisions, items or applications, and to this end the provisions of this ordinance are hereby declared severable.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that this ordinance shall take effect upon adoption.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that all ordinances or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

ORDINANCE NO. 6546 OF 2025

BY THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION:

AN ORDINANCE DECLARING CERTAIN ADJUDICATED PROPERTIES TO BE SURPLUS AND TO AUTHORIZE THE PARISH ADMINISTRATOR, OR A DESIGNEE, TO SELL THE PARISH OF CADDO'S TAX INTEREST IN CERTAIN SURPLUS ADJUDICATED PROPERTIES, AND TO OTHERWISE PROVIDE WITH RESPECT THERETO

WHEREAS, the hereinbelow described properties are no longer needed for public purposes and should be declared surplus properties; and

WHEREAS, the Parish of Caddo has received offers to purchase its tax interest in the hereinbelow described properties as indicated below.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Caddo Parish Commission in due, legal and regular session convened, that the hereinbelow described properties are no longer needed for public purposes and are surplus properties.

WHEREAS, the Parish of Caddo has a tax interest in the hereinbelow described properties which have been adjudicated for the non-payment of Parish property taxes; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that the Caddo Parish Commission does hereby authorize the sale of its tax interest in the hereinbelow described properties.

Property No. 1, Southwesterly 39.725 ft. of Lot 12 & the Northeasterly 1 ft. of Lot 13, Leavenworth Subdivision, in the City of Shreveport of Caddo Parish, Louisiana as per plat recorded in Book 100, Page 91, of the Conveyance Records of Caddo Parish, LA **(GEO # 181437-068-0043-00)**

Property No. 2, Block 4 of Resub of Blocks 1, 2, &3, TAL 21 Shreveport, in the City of Shreveport of Caddo Parish, Louisiana as per plat recorded in Book 450, Page 247, of the Conveyance Records of Caddo Parish, LA **(GEO # 181437-055-0010-00)**

Property No. 3, Northwesterly 50 ft. of Lot 11, Block 17, Shreveport, in the City of Shreveport of Caddo Parish, Louisiana as per plat recorded in Book 450, Page 247, of the Conveyance Records of Caddo Parish, LA **(GEO # 181437-122-0024-00)**

Property No. 4, The West 150 ft. of Lot 1, Olive Street Plaza Subdivision, in the City of Shreveport of Caddo Parish, Louisiana as per plat recorded in Book 2150, Page 385, of the Conveyance Records of Caddo Parish, LA **(GEO # 171401-158-0002-00)**

Property No. 5, Lot 113, less right-of-way, Lieb Subdivision, Second Filing, in the City of Shreveport of Caddo Parish, Louisiana as per plat recorded in Book 100, Page 253, of the Conveyance Records of Caddo Parish, LA **(GEO # 181435-097-0113-00)**

Property No. 6, Lots 27 & 28, Block G, Ingersoll Heights, in the City of Shreveport of Caddo Parish, Louisiana as per plat recorded in Book 33, Page 7, of the Conveyance Records of Caddo Parish, LA **(GEO # 181435-061-0083-00)**

Property No. 7, Northeasterly 37 ft. of Lot 27, less right-of-way, TAL 27 Shreveport, in the City of Shreveport of Caddo Parish, Louisiana as per plat recorded in Book 450, Page 247, of the Conveyance Records of Caddo Parish, LA **(GEO # 181437-070-0041-00)**

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that the Caddo Parish Administrator, or his designee, shall be authorized to do any and all things and to sign any and all documents, including Acts of Cash Sale, in a form acceptable to the Caddo Parish Attorney necessary to effectuate the purposes set forth herein.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that if any provision or item of this ordinance or the application thereof is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, items, or applications which can be given effect without the invalid provisions, items, or applications, and to this end, the provisions of this ordinance are hereby declared severable.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that this ordinance shall become effective ten days after publication in the official journal.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that all ordinances or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

ORDINANCES (for introduction by title)

- *Ordinance No. 6547 of 2025, an ordinance amending Article III of Chapter 19 of the Code of Ordinances relative to the E. Edward Jones Housing Trust Fund, to expand the technical review committee, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6548 of 2025, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Debt Service Fund and the Capital Outlay Fund to provide an appropriation of \$10,000,000 for the construction of a pickleball park, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

WORK SESSION MINUTES

RESOLUTIONS

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mr. G. Young, *that the Work Session Minutes from June 2, 2025 and Resolution No. 32 of 2025, a resolution evidencing Caddo Parish's public approval of bonds to be issued in connection with Capital Area Finance Authority pursuant to Section 147(f) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended be adopted. Motion carried unanimously by all Commission members.*

RESOLUTION NO. 32 OF 2025

BY THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION

A RESOLUTION EVIDENCING CADDO PARISH'S PUBLIC APPROVAL OF BONDS TO BE ISSUED IN CONNECTION WITH CAPITAL AREA FINANCE AUTHORITY PURSUANT TO SECTION 147(f) OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1986, AS AMENDED

WHEREAS, the Capital Area Finance Authority (the "Authority"), a public trust created pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 2-A of Title 9 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, as amended (R.S. 9:2341-9:2347, inclusive) (the "Act") has, by resolution dated April 16, 2025, in accordance with the requirements of the Act, and the Rules and Regulations of the Louisiana State Bond Commission (the "Bond Commission"), duly authorized the issuance of not exceeding \$100,000,000 of Capital Area Finance Authority Revenue Bonds in one or more series (the "Bonds") to finance loans to first-time homebuyers within the jurisdictional parishes of the Authority and such other governmental units (the "Participating Jurisdictions") whose governing authority authorized and directed the execution of a cooperative endeavor agreement (a "CEA") with the Authority under the provisions of the Act and other applicable constitutional and statutory authorities; and

WHEREAS, the Bond Commission, on May 15, 2025, duly authorized the issuance and sale of the Bonds in accordance with law and the Bond Commission's Rules and Regulations; and

WHEREAS, the Bonds are classified as exempt facility bonds under the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code") and the provisions of Section 147(f)(2)(A), (B) and (E) of the Code require that issuance of Bonds be approved by the "applicable elected representative" of the governmental unit which issues such bonds or on whose behalf such bonds are issued and by the "applicable elected representative" of such other Participating Jurisdictions that have executed a CEA with the Authority under the provisions of the Act; and

WHEREAS, Caddo Parish (the "Governmental Unit") has executed a CEA with the Authority to permit the financing of loans to first-time homebuyers within geographic area of the Governmental Unit; and

WHEREAS, the applicable elected representative (the "Approving Representative") of the Governmental Unit for purposes of approving the Bonds is Caddo Commission President Stormy Gage-Watts and

WHEREAS, in compliance with the requirements of the Code, Notice of Public Hearing (attached as Exhibit "A" hereto), was published in (i) The Advocate, Baton Rouge, Louisiana on April 23, 2025, (ii) The Daily Advertiser, Lafayette, Louisiana on April 23, 2025, (iii) the Houma Courier, Houma, Louisiana on April 23, 2025, (iv) the Lake Charles American Press, Lake Charles, Louisiana on April 23, 2025, (v) The News Star, Monroe, Louisiana on April 23, 2025, (vi) the Times-Picayune, New Orleans, Louisiana on April 23, 2025, (vii) The Times, Shreveport, Louisiana on April 23, 2025, and (viii) The Town Talk, Alexandria, Louisiana on April 23, 2025, and

WHEREAS, in compliance with the requirements of the Code, the public hearing with respect to the issuance of said Bonds was held on May 5, 2025, at 10:00 a.m., Louisiana Time, at 601 St. Ferdinand Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, and simultaneously held by teleconference using the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9940303250?omn=88470185621> or by dialing US toll-free: (833) 928-4610; meeting ID: 994 030 3250 in accordance with Rev. Proc. 2022-20 after due notice thereof was published in the official journal of the Authority and in the aforementioned publications sufficient to inform the public within the geographic area of the Participating Jurisdictions of the subject, date and place of said public hearing; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, The Parish of Caddo does hereby certify that the President of the Caddo Parish Commission, hereby approves and confirms the issuance of the Bonds. The Authority, and its officers, are authorized to cause this certificate to be filed of record in the transcript of proceedings for the Bonds and to file a copy thereof with any State or Federal agency, board or commission as may be required by any applicable State or Federal laws, rules or regulations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be recorded in the official

proceedings of the Caddo Parish Commission and communicated to appropriate authorities as a formal expression of support.

There was no Old Business, so the Commission moved onto New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mr. Epperson, *that the 2025-2026 Official Journal be the Shreveport Times*. Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Kracman, Lazarus, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (11). NAYS: Commissioner Burrell (1). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Jones**, seconded by Mr. Thomas, *that the following items be englobed and adopted*:

- *Appointment of Dr. Caleb Killian to the Animal Services Board to fill the unexpired term of Dr. Brad Everson. Term to expire January 1, 2027*
- *Property Standards Case No. 1—119 Barlow Avenue, Shreveport (demolition)*
- *Property Standards Case No. 2—3637 W. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, Shreveport (demolition of dilapidated buildings, but keep house intact)*
- *Property Standards Case No. 3—10840 Ellerbe Road, Shreveport (demolition)*
- *Property Standards Case No. 4—5651 Shreveport-Blanchard Hwy, Shreveport (demolition)*
- *Accept the recommendations for revisions to the NGO timeline and application*

At this time Mr. Thomas' motion carried unanimously of all Commission members.

- Caddo Animal Services Board Appeal
Appellant Allison McKneely
Case #C0009025690

Director Travis Clark came before the Commission to discuss the appeal regarding, Lucy, who was deemed dangerous in February after attacking and killing another dog. She came back before the board because she got out again in April and attacked another dog. Lucy's owner, Ms. Allison McKneely, is willing to take steps to prevent future incidents.

Ms. McKneely does not want her dog to be put down, but she understands that her dog hurt another dog. Ms. McKneely said that Lucy is not people aggressive at all, but she does have a high prey drive.

Mr. Thomas said that this puts the Commission in a hard place because it is their duty to protect citizens, but he wanted to know what she is willing to do to protect the humans of this Parish. Ms. McKneely said that she will do anything to ensure that people are safe and that Lucy is safe, like building a stronger fence, muzzling her, and exercising her more.

It was **moved by Mr. Epperson**, seconded by Mr. J. Young, *to uphold the decision of the board and deem Lucy vicious*.


Mrs. Blake wanted to know Lucy's demeanor when she was brought in. Mr. Clark said that she was not aggressive towards people. He also mentioned that the stipulations of her being deemed dangerous was not being followed.

Mr. J. Young said that it is sad when a dog loses their life. He also said that this dog has killed another dog, which is sad as well, but the citizens have to be protected.

At this time, Mr. Epperson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Kracman, Lazarus, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (11). NAYS: Commissioner Burrell (1). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

There were no Communiques & Committee Reports, nor Citizens Comments. There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m.


Michelle Nations
Assistant Commission Clerk


Stormy Gage-Watts
President