MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
OF THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION
HELD ON THE 6th DAY OF JANUARY, 2025

The Caddo Parish Commission met in a Work Session, on the above date, at 3:30 p.m., in the Government Chambers, with Mr. J. Young, presiding, and the following members in attendance constituting a quorum: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Jones, Kracman, Lazarus, Thomas, and J. Young (10). ABSENT: Commissioners Gage-Watts and G. Young (2).

Mr. Jones gave the invocation, and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Epperson.

AGENDA ADDITIONS

It was **moved by Mr. Cothran,** seconded by Mr. J. Young, *to expand the agenda and add two Special Resolutions recognizing all Principals of Year in Caddo Parish under New Business.*

At this time, the President held a public hearing regarding this agenda addition. There was no one to speak in favor or against the agenda addition, so the President closed the public hearing.

Mr. Cothran's motion carried unanimously, and the Special Resolutions were added under New Business.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

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

I rise to say Happy New Year to you all. Though business only just took a break—now, we're back to business, and we're looking forward to you all handling the business of the Parish—the citizens of Caddo Parish. Now, I sent to you all's attention a couple of emails. One of which I asked for an update on the Lighthouse Project. We had some discussion—quite extensive—as to how those projects were going to be funded; or, whether or not they've met or meet the ARPA guidelines. We don't know that. Once upon a time, they did not. Now, we were asking too, if such was the case, are we going to be looking for the Commission itself to fund those two projects? Some $500k? Then, I was looking at an agenda item to advance Resolution 3 of 2025, and it dealt with the Head Start Program. The language in that resolution—a lot of it looked duplicate. You know you dress it up to dress it down, and it really wasn't a sale for me because it said the same thing twice in paragraphs two and three. I believe in paragraph seven, it mentioned indigent recipients. I was trying to figure out, 'what does an indigent have to do with the Head Start Program?' Though, I was shared information saying that these are the requirements of the language that is normally attached thereto—the language is misleading, and I think such should be addressed. If it is that in paragraphs two and three where you're talking about specifics of children ages two to three, families, parents, or whatever, then paragraph four, the same thing just used a different word. So, we have to be mindful because we do read these agendas, and we do read the legislation, and we do want to make sure that whatever we're funding as a citizen of this Parish, that it is then the best interest of all of us, but with the language addressing exactly what it says. Thank you.

There were no Visitors, so the Commission moved to Reports.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

- Juvenile Detention

Parish Administrator, Mrs. Erica Bryant, said that there are thirteen children in the Detention Center; one of which is OJJ. There is one 17-year old, and twenty-two children at CCC. There are 472 children on probation.

- Mrs. Bryant also said that they are monitoring the weather conditions, along with the Communications and the Office of Homeland Security.

Director of Animal Services, Mr. Travis Clark, advised they are using fosters to get animals who are housed in outdoor kennels to warmer conditions. Answering a question from Mr. Cothran regarding how a citizen could participate in the foster program, Mr. Clark said that they would need to call the shelter and apply. Mr. Atkins wanted to ensure that there were enough supplies to keep the animals warm. Mr. Clark said that they accept donations year-round.

COMMISSION REMARKS

- Mrs. Blake congratulated Mike Johnson for being certified as House Speaker.

- Mr. Jones expressed concerns to Public Works regarding the litter at Woodlawn Terrace. He asked Public Works to help him establish a plan of action to eliminate the dumping. He suggested utilizing Shreveport Green for a clean up and track when trash is being dumped. He also mentioned that

the Shreve Memorial Library offers equipment to pick up litter.

- Mr. Cothran mentioned the Pines Apartments are having the same dumping issue. He also advised citizens to contact SWEPCO if the lights are out in their neighborhoods.

- Mr. Thomas encouraged citizens to bring in their pets for the winter weather. He also wanted to recognize Representative Joy Walters who was in attendance today.

- Mr. Burrell advised there is a litter problem in Caddo Parish.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. J. Young announced that this would be his last full meeting as the Commission President. He also said that the new officers would be appointed during the next meeting.

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

NEW BUSINESS

It was moved **by Mr. Epperson,** seconded by Mr. Burrell, *that the introduction of Ordinance No. 6513 of 2025, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Capital Outlay Fund to change an appropriation from the construction and improvement of Greenwood water lines to construction of the Dawson Road Extension* be moved to Thursday's Regular Session for introduction.

Mr. Epperson said that he went with Public Works to identify an alternative route for the Dawson Road Extension. It would be to the west of the SWEPCO facility. He feels that this extension should take precedence over the Greenwood water lines.

Mr. Cothran wanted to know if this was for the feasibility study for the extension. Mr. Epperson said that this would only approve the feasibility study, not the construction of the road.

Mr. J. Young wanted to know if the feasibility study would cost $750k. Mr. Epperson said that it would not.

Mr. Kracman asked for more clarification on the proposed extension road. Mr. Epperson explained that this would veer to the west of the AEP/SWEPCO facility.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know if this allocation would be in lieu of the Greenwood water lines. Mr. Epperson said that this would be in lieu of the Greenwood water lines. He further explained that Greenwood did not accept the terms of the CEA for Greenwood.

Mrs. Blake asked for Administration's opinion on this study. Mrs. Bryant said that this would start the process of the feasibility study.

At this time, Mr. Epperson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Burrell, Epperson, Jones, Thomas, and J. Young (5). NAYS: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Kracman, and Lazarus (4). ABSENT: Commissioners Gage-Watts, Jones, and G. Young (3). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Epperson,** seconded by Mr. Jones, *that Resolution No. 1 of 2025, a resolution to authorize the Caddo Parish Administrator to execute the extension of the primary term of State Agency Lease No. 22067 with Paloma Natural Gas, LLC, for an additional two years, and otherwise providing with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration. Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Kracman, Lazarus, Thomas, and G. Young (9). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioners Gage-Watts, Jones, and G. Young (3). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas,** seconded by Mr. Kracman, *that Resolution No. 2 of 2025, a resolution to relocate the polling place for Precinct 3 09 from Shreve City Baptist Church, 2810 Knight Street, Shreveport, LA 71104 to Valencia Park, 1800 Viking Drive, Shreveport, LA 71101, and otherwise providing with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration. Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Jones, Kracman, Lazarus, Thomas, and G. Young (10). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioners Gage-Watts, and G. Young (2). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Jones,** seconded by Mr. Epperson, *that Resolution No. 3 of 2025, a resolution authorizing the Caddo Community Action Agency, Inc. to administer the Head Start Program for the Parish of Caddo, and otherwise providing with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration.

Mr. J. Young mentioned that he did not see any repetitive language in the resolution. He also explained that this is done every year. Mrs. Bryant said that this program has operated successfully for 49 years. Mr. J. Young requested that a Special Resolution be drafted honoring the 50th Anniversary of the Head Start Program.

Mr. Atkins said that the agenda has a positive track record and is highly regarded.

At this time, Mr. Jones' motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Jones, Kracman, Lazarus, Thomas, and G. Young (10). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioners Gage-Watts, and G. Young (2). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Jones,** seconded by Mr. Thomas, *that Resolution No. 4 of 2025, a resolution approving the amended 2024 amended and proposed 2025 budgets of the North Louisiana Criminalistics Laboratory Commission and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration.

Mr. Atkins said that this budget is not balanced, and had to obtain emergency funding last year.

Mrs. Bryant explained that the current budget is considered balanced according to State Law; however, there are concerns about using the fund balance to survive. Using the fund balance is concerning as it is unsustainable once it is depleted. She further explained that the Crime Lab's funding comes from court costs, which has decreased due to increased settlements.

The Clerk of the Commission explained that the budget has to be approved by the majority of the parishes within the Crime Lab's region. A decision to not support the budget would not halt their operations, unless a majority of the other parishes also oppose it.

Mr. J. Young said that Caddo Parish has the bulk of the work, but does not pay as much that they would like Caddo Parish to pay. Mrs. Bryant said that the current payments may be less than desired, but Caddo Parish is not legally obligated to increase the funds. She also mentioned that additional funds have been allocated in the past.

Substitute motion by Mr. J. Young, seconded by Mr. Thomas, *that Resolution No. 4 of 2025, a resolution approving the amended 2024 amended and proposed 2025 budgets of the North Louisiana Criminalistics Laboratory Commission and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be remanded to the Public Safety Committee for further discussion.

Mr. Burrell requested that Administration invite Dr. Jones to the next meeting. Mrs. Bryant said that they will invite him to give an update.

Mr. Cothran said that this has been an ongoing issue, and additional funds have been previously allocated. He suggested that state legislation be changed to address these concerns.

Mr. Atkins agreed and said that there has been no effort to reduce the expenditures or increase revenues.

Mr. J. Young inquired about a bill in the State legislature regarding funding crime labs. Attorney Frazier does not recall one, but will research it further.

Mr. Burrell asked about their fund balance. Mrs. Bryant said that their fund balance is from funds they have accrued over the years. She also explained that they are projecting a $700k decrease in expenses from 2024 to 2025. Emergency funding of $1.5M was secured to maintain a manageable fund balance. She reiterated that parishes are not legally obligated to contribute additional funds. Mr. Burrell suggested changing "may" to "shall" in the bill.

At this time, Mr. J. Young's substitute motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Jones, Kracman, Lazarus, Thomas, and J. Young (9). NAYS: Commissioner Blake (1). ABSENT: Commissioners Gage-Watts, and G. Young (2). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. J. Young,** seconded by Mr. Thomas, *that the following Special Resolutions* be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration.

- *Proclamation Human Trafficking Awareness Month*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition for Destiny Martin*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition for Operation Santa Clause*

- *Proclamation National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day*

- *Special Resolution of Recognition for Lois Hughes*

- *Special Resolution of Recognition for Caddo High School Principal of the Year, Crystal Barnes, Principal at Booker T Washington*

- *Special Resolution of Recognition for Caddo Elementary School Principal of the Year, Tracy Cathon, Southern Hills Elementary*

- *Special Resolution of Recognition for Caddo Middle School Principal of the Year, Nicolas Cunningham, North Caddo Elementary/Middle*

- *Reappointment Bryan Moliter, Constance Griffin, Sarrah Walton, and Loraine Guerrero to the Animal Services Board*

- *Advance the formal receipt of the 2024 Charter Review Committee's final report*

At this time, Mr. J. Young's motion carried unanimously.

It was **moved by Mr. Epperson,** seconded by Mr. J. Young, *that the appointment of Chris Davis to the Human Services District Board to replace the unexpired term of Mr. David Hoey* be move to Thursday's agenda for consideration.

Mr. Kracman wanted to know why the current appointee is being replaced. Mr. J. Young said that the current appointee cannot serve in this capacity due to current legal entanglements.

At this time, Mr. Epperson's motion carried unanimously.

It was **move by Mr. Thomas,** seconded by Mr. J. Young, *that the consideration of Establishing a sales tax within the boundaries of the I-49 North Corridor Economic Development District in connection with the PILOT agreement with Edgemont Holdings, LLC* be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration.

Mr. J. Young explained that this travel center was built near the Town of Hosston. The owner financed the public utilities and infrastructure improvements for this travel center. The Commission has already approved a PILOT Program to reimburse him for some of those costs by the end of 2035. If the proposed 2% sales tax is approved, then he would be reimbursed five years sooner. Mr. J. young said that the Long Range Planning Committee recommended sending this to the Commission body.

Mr. Kracman said that this would impose a sales tax on the citizens of Hosston, who have very limited access to shopping.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know if there was a PILOT in place currently. Mr. J. Young said that there is currently a property tax PILOT in place.

Mr. Cothran said that this would help him recover his funds five years earlier. Mrs. Bryant also mentioned that this would also put the property back on the tax rolls five years earlier. Mr. J. Young explained that the 8-acre facility is valued at $13M.

At this time, Mr. Thomas' motion failed, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Burrell, Jones, Lazarus, Thomas, and J. Young (5). NAYS: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Cothran, Epperson, and Kracman (5). ABSENT: Commissioners Gage-Watts, and G. Young (2). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. J. Young,** seconded by Mr. Kracman, *that the consideration of amendments to Red River Expressway Cooperative Endeavor Agreement* be postponed to the January 21, 2025 Work Session.

Mr. J. Young explained that there are changes in the CEA that needs to be reviewed. Those documents are now available, so he would like there to be sufficient time for perusal of those documents.

At this time, Mr. J. Young's motion carried unanimously.

COMMUNIQUES/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Mr. Jones invited all to join in a city-wide day of prayer at Peaceful Rest Baptist Church

- Mrs. Blake cautioned that the flu is on the rise. She encouraged all to go to the doctor if they are not feeling well.

Mrs. Blake also said that she will be with the Water Sewage Department on water issues.

- Mr. Thomas acknowledged the peaceful transfer of power and hopes the peace continues going forward.

He also recognized State Representative Walters and asked that she come forward to speak on

- Mr. Atkins encouraged the Crime Lab to apply for some state funding.

CONSENT AGENDA

- *Ordinance No. 6512 of 2024, an ordinance to close and abandon a portion of the public dedication for Wells Island Road, located in Section 13, Township 18 North, Range 14 West, in the Parish of Caddo, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

At this time, there was no further discussion to come before the Commission, so the Commission adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Ashlyn King
Office Specialist

Michelle Nations
Assistant to the Commission Clerk