

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 2nd DAY OF DECEMBER, 2024

The Caddo Parish Appropriation Committee met in legal session on the above date at 2:30 p.m., in the Government Plaza Chambers Conference Room, with Mr. Cothran, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cothran, Gage-Watts, Jones, Thomas, and G. Young, and J. Young (8). ABSENT: (0).

The Pledge of Allegiance was given by Commissioner Atkins and invocation was given by Commissioner Thomas.

There being no Citizen's Comments or Agenda Additions, the Committee moved to New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Continue Discussion of Appropriations process to include possible recommendations of updates regarding the application, scoring, etc.*

Mr. Cothran and other committee members applauded how the finance team goes above and beyond to assist NGOs with grant applications and recognize the challenges faced by those unfamiliar with the process. Hew suggested straightforward scores based on specific criteria and based it on clients and the amount of funding needed.

Packets were given last meeting for review and it was suggested how the packets could be shortened to make it easier for clients and changes made to the scoring method. There has been ongoing problems with the completion of packets and reporting. Jalisa from finance works with clients and assists them the best she can with details to complete those applications.

Finance advised that they translate the complex information to simpler terms so clients can complete the application. They may tweak some things with the process, but a level playing field is crucial because the clients compete for limited funds.

The team was encouraged to have active participation to shape the process; finance advised that over the years adjustments had been made to give the clients insight and in hopes of improvement next year.

There is agreement among committee members that the current process shouldn't be altered. They believe it should be maintained long enough for everyone to understand it fully. Constant changes lead to more confusion. While the process may be complicated for some, it is important to see dedication to follow through. A comparison is made with the FBI's detailed processes that initially seem excessive but serve a purpose.

Members believe it is beneficial to let the process continue and improve, noting issues arise mainly when scores are disregarded in funding decisions. There is emphasis on the importance of the scoring sheet as it serves as a critical evaluation tool, although simplifying it could be helpful.

Some members express concerns about the fairness of scoring. They seek clarity on how scores are assigned and the criteria used. They want to ensure that everyone is evaluated equally based on the same standards. Requests for funding that arise mid-year should be considered necessary to allow for more flexibility in appropriations.

The discussion centered around refining the scoring rather than changing the entire process. There was confusion previously about why some groups received funding despite lower scores, while others did not, leading to concerns about transparency and fairness in funding decisions. Clarifying the scoring criteria and improving communication about the process is deemed necessary to foster trust and effectiveness in the allocation of funds.

Emphasis on the need to consult financial staff and legal advisors for decisions, showcasing a preference for collective input rather than unilateral decision-making. Concerns were raised about the committee's ability to govern its own budget and spending behavior. A call for accountability in budget decisions was emphasized, advocating for controlled spending and efficient resource allocation.

No further discussion was needed on this topic

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.



Ashlyn King
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