

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION  
OF THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION  
HELD ON THE 3rd DAY OF APRIL, 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, Lazarus, Thomas, and G. Young (10). ABSENT: Commissioners Kracman and J. Young (2).

The Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance were given during previous meetings. Mrs. Gage-Watts asked for a moment of silence.

**AGENDA ADDITIONS**

It was **moved by Mrs. Gage-Watts**, seconded by Mr. Jones, *that the agenda be expanded and the following items be placed on the agenda under Special Resolutions:*

- *Special Resolution of Recognition for Rev. Dr. Thomas Myles, Jr.*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition for Marcus Palmer*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition for Kourtney Brownlee*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition for J. Bennett Johnson*

At this time, Mrs. Gage-Watts opens the floor for a public hearing. There being no one to speak favor or against the agenda additions, Madam President closed the public hearing.

At this time, Mrs. Gage-Watts' motion carried unanimously by those Commissioners who were present with Commissioners Kracman and J. Young being absent (2).

There were no Citizens Comments nor Visitors, so the Commission moved onto the next agenda item.

**ADOPT REGULAR SESSION MINUTES**

It was **moved by Mrs. Gage-Watts**, seconded by Mr. Cothran, *that the Regular Session Minutes from March 20, 2025 be adopted. Motion carried unanimously by those Commissioners who were present with Commissioners Kracman and J. Young being absent (2).*

**SPECIAL RESOLUTIONS**

It was **moved by Mrs. Gage-Watts**, seconded by Mr. Lazarus, *to englobo and adopt the following Special Resolutions:*

- *Special Resolution of Remembrance for former Commissioner Jim Smith*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition for Women's History Month*
- *Special Resolution celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Rev., Dr. Bernard and Rev., Dr. Phoebe Kimble*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition for Foster Grandparents*
- *Special Resolution of Remembrance for Frank Taylor*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition for Rev. Dr. Thomas Myles, Jr.*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition for Marcus Palmer*

Mr. Jones congratulated Mr. Palmer for all of his hard work academically and athletically. He praised his leadership to the students at Woodlawn and at other schools. Several other Commissioners commended Mr. Palmer and his parents for all of his accomplishments and wished him well on future endeavors.

Mr. Palmer thanked the Commission for honoring him today. He also gave praise to his Step-Mom, Dad, Coach, and Principal for everything they have done to getting him to where he is today.

- *Special Resolution of Recognition for Kourtney Brownlee*

- *Special Resolution of Recognition for J. Bennett Johnson*

At this time, Mrs. Gage-Watts' motion carried unanimously by those Commissioners who were present with Commissioners Kracman and J. Young being absent (2).

### **SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF REMEMBRANCE FORMER COMMISSIONER JIM SMITH**

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission pauses to honor and remember the distinguished life and legacy of Jimmy "Jim" Frank Smith, who dedicated his life to serving others and made significant contributions to Caddo Parish through his service as Commissioner of District 11 for three terms; and

WHEREAS, Jim Smith was born on September 20, 1937, in Corinth, Mississippi, to Reverend James Smith and Verlie Smith, and throughout his life, he demonstrated the values of faith, integrity, and community service instilled in him by his upbringing; and

WHEREAS, Jim pursued higher education, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Mississippi State University, and later moved to Shreveport, Louisiana, in 1972, where he and his beloved wife, Elwanda Kitchens Smith, established deep roots and created a welcoming home filled with love, warmth, and generosity; and

WHEREAS, he was a dedicated public servant who was honored by the voters of Caddo Parish District 11, serving three terms on the Caddo Parish Commission, where he worked tirelessly to improve the lives of his constituents, advocate for the needs of the community, and ensure the growth and development of Caddo Parish; and

WHEREAS, Jim Smith's life of service extended beyond public office, as he was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, cherishing the time spent with his family and imparting values of kindness, compassion, and dedication to those around him; and

WHEREAS, Jim is preceded in death by his parents, Reverend James Smith and Verlie Smith; his sister, Patricia Smith Briggs; and his son-in-law, Joe Buffington. He leaves behind his devoted wife of 67 years, Elwanda Kitchens Smith; son, Dr. Jerry Smith and wife, Roxanne; daughter, Sherri Smith Buffington; grandchildren, Megan Smith, Jacob Smith, Taylor Buffington Brassfield and husband, Daniel, and Mitchell Buffington and wife, Arielle; and great-grandchildren, Liza Brassfield, Millicent Buffington, and Barrett Buffington, all of whom will cherish his memory and legacy; and

WHEREAS, Jim Smith's unwavering faith guided his life, and as we mourn his passing, we take comfort in knowing that he is at peace with his Lord and Savior. His life was a testament to the power of service, love, and faith, and he will forever be remembered for his kindness, leadership, and dedication to the people of Caddo Parish;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, that it does hereby express its deepest condolences to the family and loved ones former Commissioner Jim Smith, honors his memory, and recognizes his outstanding contributions to Caddo Parish as a dedicated public servant and community leader, & that this resolution serve as a token of the Commission's gratitude and respect for his lifetime of service and commitment to the people of Caddo Parish.

### **SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**

WHEREAS, American women of every race, class, and ethnic background have made historic contributions to the growth and strength of our Nation in countless recorded and unrecorded ways; and

WHEREAS, American women have played and continue to play a critical economic, cultural, and social role in every sphere of the life of the Nation by constituting a significant portion of the labor force working inside and outside the home; and

WHEREAS, American women have played a unique role throughout the history of the Nation by providing the majority of the Nation's volunteer labor force; and

WHEREAS, American women were particularly important in the establishment of early charitable, philanthropic, and cultural institutions in our Nation; and

WHEREAS, despite these contributions, the role of the American women in history has been consistently overlooked and undervalued in the literature, teaching and study of American history; and

WHEREAS, women across the globe face similar obstacles and biases and have come together to encourage a diverse, equitable and inclusive world by celebrating the achievements of women,

raising awareness of bias, and taking action for equality; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, meeting in legal and regular session this 31st day of March, 2025 that it does hereby proclaim March, 2025 as:

**'NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH'**

AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Caddo Parish Commission does hereby proclaim March 8th, 2025 as:

**'INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY'**

in Caddo Parish, Louisiana, and urges all citizens to join with the Parish to celebrate the recognitions of these important occasions.

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION  
50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
REV., DR. BERNARD & REV., DR. PHOEBE KIMBLE**

WHEREAS, Bishop Bernard Kimble, Ph.D., serves faithfully as Pastor of the Mt. Olive Shreveport Church, a 21st Century Ministry whose deepest concern is the community at large who has dedicated his life not only to preaching and teaching the Word of God both nationally and internationally, but also to serving the greater Shreveport community through leadership on various civic boards and initiatives, including the Metropolitan Planning Commission, the Airport Special Task Force, and currently as Chairman of the Ministers of Economic Development of Northwest Louisiana, member of the Community in Schools Advisory Committee, and as a member of the BioMedical Research Foundation Board, and founder of Olive Branch Ministries, Inc., an outreach ministry that developed the Olive Grove Senior Living Residence, providing quality senior living for the community, and through the "In the Word" radio broadcast on Channel 6, and founded the Bishop Carey McCall Church Incubator, "A Place of New Beginnings," to assist new and struggling ministries in honor of his late son, Bishop Carey McCall; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Kimble, together with his beloved wife, First Lady Rev., Dr. Phoebe Kimble, co-founded Women of Vision Shreveport, Inc., an organization dedicated to educating, encouraging, and empowering women in leadership roles and extending help to women and children facing hard times by offering a hand up rather than a handout; and

WHEREAS, Rev., Dr. Phoebe Kimble serves as the President and CEO of Women of Vision Shreveport, Inc., and is instrumental in sponsoring annual events such as the Preserving Legacy Leadership Conference, Health and Wellness Info Fair, Salvation Army Angel Tree, Angels of Faith Youth Program, Blanket & Toiletry Drives, Back-to-School Giveaways, Toys for Tots Drives, NICU baby item collections, and Salvation Army Food Drives; Rev. Dr. Phoebe Kimble is also a proud and active member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, reflecting her dedication to sisterhood, scholarship and service, she is also a notable trailblazer in business and ministry, becoming the first Black woman to own a store in downtown Shreveport as owner of Lena's Shoe Gallery and becoming the 1st pastor's wife in Mt. Olive's history to preach the Gospel, culminating in her consecration as an Elder in 2022; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Bernard Kimble, Ph.D., and Rev., Dr. Phoebe Thomas Kimble were united in holy matrimony on March 30, 1975, building a strong and faith-filled family that includes their sons, Minister Darius Kimble and Overseer Anthony Bernard Kimble; their daughter, Latoya Payne; and their six cherished grandchildren: Caellen, Cameron, Corinne, Kevon, Braelen, and Mikah; and their example of faith, leadership, service, and love demonstrated by Bishop Bernard Kimble and Elder Dr. Phoebe Kimble has inspired countless lives and continues to bless the Shreveport community and beyond.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, that it does hereby honor, celebrate, and recognize the outstanding ministry, service, and marriage of Bishop Bernard Kimble, Ph.D., and Rev., Dr. Phoebe Kimble on the occasion of their 50th anniversary and expresses sincere gratitude for their tireless efforts to uplift the community and empower future generations; and that this resolution be presented to the Kimble family as an enduring symbol of respect, admiration, and congratulations.

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION  
FOSTER GRANDPARENTS**

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to commend AmeriCorps Seniors Caddo/Bossier Foster Grandparent Volunteer Program for its (45) forty-five years of exceptional service in Caddo and Bossier;

WHEREAS, service in AmeriCorps promotes bridge-building, collaboration, and leadership skills, and AmeriCorps programs bring the people of the United States together from different backgrounds, generations, and geographic locations;

WHEREAS, for more than 5 decades, millions of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in the Foster Grandparent program have played an important role in strengthening communities by sharing their

experience, knowledge, and accomplishments with the individuals they serve;

WHEREAS, this nationwide program offers seniors, who are (55) fifty-five years of age or older, the opportunity to serve as mentors, tutors, and caregivers to economically disadvantaged youth one-on-one, helps to improve behavioral and educational outcomes for students with special and exceptional needs, helping children who suffer from abuse or neglect, and provide support to children of veterans or who have a deployed family members; and serving over 280, 000 special needs children through a network of various organizations; and helping to guide students to higher academic achievement; and

WHEREAS, the AmeriCorps Seniors SUSLA Foster Grandparent Volunteer Program matches the willingness and capacity of Caddo/Bossier FGP's volunteers to devote their time, experience, and compassion with the needs of children to learn and prepare for the life ahead of them; and

WHEREAS, this program continues to fulfill its mission of providing guidance and support to disadvantaged children, enriching your life while enriching the lives of others. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers who serve with in the Foster Grandparent program provide the kind of comfort and love that sets a child on a path to a successful future. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers themselves report better health and longevity having served their community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, meeting in legal and regular session this 3rd day of April, 2025, that it does hereby proclaim May 9, 2025 as:

**“AMERICORPS SENIORS FOSTER GRANDPARENT VOLUNTEER DAY”**

in Caddo Parish, Louisiana, and urges all citizens to join with the Parish to celebrate, commend and congratulate the AmeriCorps Seniors SUSLA Caddo/Bossier Foster Grandparent Volunteer Program for its (45) forty-four years of exceptional service to children and hereby extend best wishes for continued success in the future.

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF REMEMBRANCE  
FRANK TAYLOR**

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission pauses to honor and remember the life, service, and legacy of Frank Norris Taylor, a dedicated veteran, community servant, and respected leader who will be funeralized on March 22, 2025; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Taylor honorably served his country in the United States Air Force for an impressive 21 years and 6 months, from April 1966 until October 31, 1987, during which time he served as a Plumbing Technician and bravely served in the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, throughout his distinguished military career, Mr. Taylor received numerous commendations, including the Air Force Commendation Medal, Longevity Service Award, National Defense Medal, Outstanding Unit Award, Good Conduct Medal, Overseas Long Tour Ribbon, and the Vietnam Service Medal, all reflecting his steadfast commitment to excellence, duty, and country; and

WHEREAS, after retiring from the Air Force, Mr. Taylor continued his life of service as a devoted member of the American Legion for over 35 years, most recently serving as Chaplain of the Leonard C. Barnes Post 450 for the past 13 years; and

WHEREAS, in his role as Chaplain, Mr. Taylor provided spiritual guidance, support, and encouragement to countless veterans and their families, embodying the spirit of service and compassion; and

WHEREAS, his leadership and contributions were greatly valued and deeply respected by his fellow American Legion members, including Caddo Parish Commission Members and Post 450 Board Members Ron Cothran and Ken Epperson; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Taylor's life was defined by honor, service, and dedication to both his country and his community, leaving a lasting impact on those who knew him and serving as a shining example of selflessness and patriotism;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Caddo Parish Commission does hereby express its deepest sympathy and extend heartfelt condolences to the family, friends, and fellow American Legion members of Frank Norris Taylor;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Caddo Parish Commission does hereby honor and remember the legacy of Frank Norris Taylor for his unwavering service to his country, his community, and his fellow veterans and includes this document in the official minutes of the Caddo Parish Commission and that an official copy be presented to the family of Frank Norris Taylor in recognition of his life, his service, and his enduring legacy of sacrifice and commitment.

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION**

**REV. DR. THOMAS MYLES, JR.**

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission pauses to recognize and honor the extraordinary leadership, unwavering faith, and dedicated service of Reverend Dr. Thomas Myles, Jr., who, as the visionary leader of New Birth Baptist Church in Shreveport, Louisiana, has served as a beacon of light and hope to his congregation and community for the past five years; and

WHEREAS, born in Leland, Mississippi, Reverend Dr. Myles was divinely prepared for a life of service and was called to the Gospel Ministry, faithfully dedicating his life to guiding others into a Christ-centered relationship, emphasizing faith, transformation, and the power of God's purpose; and

WHEREAS, under his dynamic leadership, New Birth Baptist Church has flourished, expanding its ministries and outreach programs to serve the needs of the Shreveport community. Among his many accomplishments, he spearheaded the creation of a state-of-the-art Children's Ministry Facility, provided aid to victims of Hurricanes Laura and Delta through the Mount Zion Baptist Church Relief Fund, and fostered vital community partnerships with Cherokee Park Elementary School, Southern University at Shreveport, and the City of Shreveport to establish programs such as the 1st-Time Homeowners Program; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Myles' compassionate heart and unwavering commitment to service have been further demonstrated through initiatives such as annual Thanksgiving meal distributions, toy and coat drives, storm relief efforts, and the establishment of cooling centers for residents during power outages, ensuring that his ministry extends beyond the walls of the church and into the lives of those most in need; and

WHEREAS, his tenure at New Birth Baptist Church has also seen significant advancements in the church's infrastructure, including the acquisition of two additional properties, the remodeling of the church foyer and offices, the replacement of a deteriorating roof, and the procurement of a new church van, all of which reflect his dedication to the growth and sustainability of the church; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Myles' spiritual guidance and leadership extend beyond his church, as he ordained new ministers, nurtured emerging church leaders, and organized impactful ministries such as prayer gatherings, widows and widowers' ministries, and a candlelight communion service, all designed to deepen the faith and fellowship of those he served & all reflective of his guiding motto: "Choose a Christ-Centered Relationship over a Church Membership," which has inspired countless individuals to walk in faith and purpose; and

WHEREAS, he is faithfully supported in ministry by his beloved wife, Lady Quantine Myles, who stands beside him as a co-laborer in Christ, exemplifying the strength and unity of a Christ-centered partnership; and

WHEREAS, as he reaches this milestone of five years of dedicated service at New Birth Baptist Church, the Caddo Parish Commission celebrates his unwavering leadership, commitment to faith, and profound impact on the community;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, that it does hereby express its sincere appreciation and congratulations to Reverend Dr. Thomas Myles, Jr. on his 5-year anniversary at New Birth Baptist Church and commends his continued dedication to faith, service, and community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be presented to Reverend Dr. Thomas Myles, Jr. as a token of the Commission's gratitude and in honor of his outstanding leadership and commitment to uplifting the Shreveport community.

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION  
MARCUS PALMER**

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission desires to give appropriate recognition to those young people of Caddo Parish, who by their extraordinary achievements have distinguished themselves in ways that reflect favorably and positively upon this Parish; and

WHEREAS, Marcus Palmer is a senior at Woodlawn High School, where he exemplifies excellence in both academics and athletics; and

WHEREAS, as an Early College Student at Southern University at Shreveport (SUSLA), Marcus is taking dual enrollment classes and maintaining an impressive 3.9 GPA, while his high school GPA reached a remarkable 4.44 last semester; and

WHEREAS, Marcus will be graduating with his Associate's Degree from SUSLA on May 12, 2025, at the Shreveport Convention Center; and

WHEREAS, Marcus' academic achievements earned him membership in the prestigious

honor society of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK); and

WHEREAS, athletically, Marcus has achieved legendary status as the Louisiana State Champion in the Division II Super Heavyweight Powerlifting Class through relentless hard work and determination. His outstanding lifts include a 740-lb squat, 440-lb bench press, and 430-lb deadlift; and

WHEREAS, on the football field, Marcus has consistently shone as a leader, being named All-District for all four years of his high school career and earned All-State recognition during his senior season. His dedication and talent have secured him a football scholarship at Louisiana Christian University, where he plans to continue his athletic and academic journey in Sports Medicine; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, meeting in legal and regular session this 3rd day of April, 2025 that it does hereby once again heartily commend and congratulate Marcus Palmer for his success and for the pride and honor he has brought to his family, school, and Parish.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Commission does wish for Mr. Palmer much continued success on all of his future endeavors in life.

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION  
KOURTNEY BROWNLEE**

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission is proud to recognize individuals who demonstrate exceptional leadership, dedication, and commitment to improving the quality of life for our community, particularly in the field of healthcare; and

WHEREAS, Kourtney Brownlee, Administrator of Booker T. Washington Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation in Shreveport, Louisiana, has been named Administrator of the Year for 2024 by the Louisiana Nursing Home Association (LNHA) in recognition of her outstanding leadership and unwavering commitment to excellence in long-term care; and

WHEREAS, Brownlee, a seasoned healthcare professional, has been an integral part of Priority Management for nearly two decades, first serving as Director of Nursing at another Priority Management facility for ten years before obtaining her Administrator's license in 2016 and assuming leadership at Booker T. Washington Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation, where she has served for the last eight years; and

WHEREAS, under her visionary leadership, Booker T. Washington Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation has maintained a long-standing reputation for excellence in resident care, ensuring that residents receive compassionate, high-quality services in a homelike environment that prioritizes dignity and well-being; and

WHEREAS, Brownlee's remarkable track record in regulatory compliance and operational excellence is exemplified by her leadership in achieving three consecutive deficiency-free surveys, a testament to her dedication to quality care, with the most recent achievement in 2022; and

WHEREAS, her leadership philosophy is deeply rooted in hands-on engagement, recognizing that true administrative excellence extends beyond the office—Brownlee is often found throughout the facility interacting with residents, staff, and visitors, ensuring that the needs of all are met with care and compassion; and

WHEREAS, Brownlee's ability to inspire and uplift her team, coupled with her steadfast dedication to the well-being of her residents and employees, has made her a pillar of excellence in the long-term care industry and a valued leader in the Shreveport community;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, that it does hereby commend and congratulate Kourtney Brownlee on being named Administrator of the Year for 2024 by the Louisiana Nursing Home Association, recognizing her exceptional leadership, unwavering dedication, and significant contributions to the long-term care industry; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be presented to Kourtney Brownlee as a token of appreciation and acknowledgment of her outstanding service to the residents of Booker T. Washington Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation and the community of Caddo Parish.

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION  
J. BENNETT JOHNSON**

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission pauses to honor and remember the life, legacy, and distinguished service of former United States Senator J. Bennett Johnston, a dedicated public servant whose leadership and vision profoundly impacted Louisiana and the nation; and

WHEREAS, J. Bennett Johnston was born on June 10, 1932, in Shreveport, Louisiana,

and throughout his lifetime remained deeply connected to his home state, advocating tirelessly for the people of Louisiana through his service in public office; and

WHEREAS, Senator Johnston's political career began in the Louisiana House of Representatives, where he served before being elected to the Louisiana State Senate. In 1972, he was elected to the United States Senate, where he faithfully represented Louisiana for four consecutive terms until his retirement in 1997; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure in the U.S. Senate, he was a powerful advocate for Louisiana's economic growth, energy policy, infrastructure development, and environmental conservation. His leadership on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee helped shape policies crucial to Louisiana's oil and gas industry, flood control, and coastal restoration efforts; and

WHEREAS, Senator Johnston played a pivotal role in securing federal funding for key Louisiana projects, including improvements to the Red River Waterway, major infrastructure developments, and initiatives supporting higher education and scientific research in the state; and

WHEREAS, his work extended beyond politics, as he was known for his bipartisan leadership, statesmanship, and dedication to improving the lives of Louisiana citizens, earning the respect and admiration of colleagues on both sides of the aisle; and

WHEREAS, Jim is preceded in death by his parents, Reverend James Smith and Verlie Smith; his sister, Patricia Smith Briggs; and his son-in-law, Joe Buffington. He leaves behind his devoted wife of 67 years, Elwanda Kitchens Smith; son, Dr. Jerry Smith and wife, Roxanne; daughter, Sherri Smith Buffington; grandchildren, Megan Smith, Jacob Smith, Taylor Buffington Brassfield and husband, Daniel, and Mitchell Buffington and wife, Arielle; and great-grandchildren, Liza Brassfield, Millicent Buffington, and Barrett Buffington, all of whom will cherish his memory and legacy; and

WHEREAS, J. Bennett Johnston's commitment to service, economic development, and the advancement of Louisiana's interests left a lasting imprint on the state and the nation, and his passing is a great loss to all who knew and admired him; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission, that it does hereby express its deepest condolences on the passing of former U.S. Senator J. Bennett Johnston and recognizes his invaluable contributions to Louisiana and the United States; and that a copy of this resolution be presented to the family of J. Bennett Johnston as a tribute to his remarkable life, service, and enduring legacy.

#### **ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

- Poet Laureate

Mrs. Bryant advised that the Commissioners have the candidate information for the Poet Laureate in their boxes.

- Government Plaza Security

Mrs. Bryant also mentioned that the new security protocols will be implemented on April 11, 2025. She stated that the Commissioners will need both the City of Shreveport badge and the Caddo Commission badge to get to different secured locations in the building. These badges are also needed to operate the elevators. She asked that the Commissioners test their badges to determine if they are working or not.

Mr. G. Young wanted to know if the technology exists to use only one badge. Mrs. Bryant explained that the technology does exist, however, two separate systems are used due to security concerns. She explained that the City of Shreveport should not have access to Parish documents, and vice-versa. Mr. G. Young stated that he does not like these new security protocols.

#### **COMMUNIQUES & COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- Mr. Cothran announced that the Sheriff's Walk With A Purpose event will be held on April 7 beginning at 6:00 p.m. He invited all to attend.

He also said that the Long Range Planning Committee met to discuss Ordinance No. 6525 of 2025. The Committee voted unanimously to postpone the Ordinance until additional information is gathered.

Mr. Cothran talked about insurance in the State of Louisiana, and how it is the highest in the nation. He attended a meeting with the Commissioner of Insurance to discuss ways to decrease the rates.

- Mr. Epperson invited all to attend the Family Engagement Night that will be held this evening at Caddo Community Action Agency's Head Start. He mentioned that the Chief Executive Officer of Waterford will be in attendance to honor, Mathew Wilson, for his remarkable achievement of mastering the Waterford module.

- Mr. Thomas announced that Jazz Fest on the Red will be held on April 12; the Expungement Summit will be held on May 14; Red River Cork Festival will be held on April 6; the Free Rabies Clinic will be held on April 26; and the Caddo Sheriff Misdemeanor Warrant Clinic will be held on April 5.

Mr. Samuel said that the Free Rabies Clinic will be held at the Summer Grove Church. Animal Services Department will be giving out free rabies shots to the first 300 pets.

Mr. Thomas also mentioned that the Light It Up Blue event for autism has been rescheduled to the end of the month.

- Mrs. Blake announced that April is National Sexual Assault Awareness Month. She provided the statistics on sexual assaults in the United States.

She also talked about the strong storm system that is expected this weekend. Mrs. Blake cautioned everyone to be prepared for potential power outages and strong winds.

### ***PRESIDENT'S REPORT***

Mrs. Gage-Watts announced that April is National Parish/County Government Month. She asked that the names for Commissioners for A Day be submitted no later than tomorrow. The event will be held on April 17, 2025.

She also made the following announcements: there will be a townhall meeting for Moortown on April 8; Love the Boot Week is April 5 through April 13; April is Autism Awareness Month; Perfect Fit Autism Foundation Superhero Fundraiser will be held on April 26; and National Crime Victims Week is April 6 through April 12.

Mr. Wesley, Parks & Recreation, thanked Mrs. Gage-Watts for inviting him to the podium to talk about the upcoming events that will be hosted by Parks & Recreation.

Major League Baseball (MLB) is collaborating with the Parks Department to provide a youth baseball development program. This program will also provide the equipment, training, and materials needed to establish this program. The main focus is for youth in underserved populations. They would also like to encourage girls to participate in sports. MLB will spotlight the Caddo Parish Parks & Recreation Youth Baseball League event this weekend and do a story on the new Youth Development Program Complex. MLB helped Caddo Parish secure \$400k to build a synthetic grass turf infield at Pinchback Park.

National Basketball Association (NBA) is also an affiliate with Caddo Parish. There will be a Skills & Drills Competition at Huntington High School in honor of Devin Myers who was killed in senseless act of violence.

Several proposals for summer programs will be presented over the next couple of weeks. A community-based summer crime prevention program will also be introduced, involving collaboration between various agencies, such as the District Attorney's Office.

Parks & Recreation's program aims to improve the quality of life by addressing the needs of both children and their families. The success of these programs is measured not only statistics, but also by the happiness and positive experiences they generate.

Mrs. Gage-Watts also reminded everyone that the Caddo Summer Jobs link is open and available for students to fill out applications.

She also talked about Operation Ask Blue, which is a program that offers reporting options to the Shreveport Police Department. She advised citizens to contact 318-673-6950 or 311 to report squatters.

There were no Public Hearing on Zoning Ordinances, so the Commission moved onto Public Hearing on Ordinances.

### ***PUBLIC HEARING ON ORDINANCES***

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

- *Ordinance No. 6525 of 2025, an ordinance dedicating fifty percent (50%) of the*

*income generated from the Parish share of sports wagering receipts to the E. Edward Jones Housing Trust Fund and amending the General Fund and the E. Edward Jones Housing Trust Fund for sports wagering revenues, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

There being no one to speak in favor, or against, the ordinances, the President closed the public hearing. There were no Zoning Ordinances for final passage, so the Commission moved onto Ordinances for final passage.

#### **ORDINANCES (for final passage)**

It was **moved by Mr. Cothran**, seconded Mr. Thomas, *that Ordinance No. 6525 of 2025, an ordinance dedicating fifty percent (50%) of the income generated from the Parish share of sports wagering receipts to the E. Edward Jones Housing Trust Fund and amending the General Fund and the E. Edward Jones Housing Trust Fund for sports wagering revenues, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be postponed until more information is received. Motion carried unanimously of those Commissioners who were present with Commissioners Jones, Kracman, and J. Young being absent (3).

There were no Zoning Ordinances for introduction by title, so the Commission moved onto Ordinances for introduction by title.

#### **ORDINANCES (for introduction by title)**

- *Ordinance No. 6526 of 2025, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Oil & Gas Fund and the Riverboat Fund to provide an appropriation of \$30,000 for Youth Outreach Services dba Jewell House, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6527 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*
- *Ordinance No. 6528 of 2025, an ordinance to donate surplus property under Chapter 19, Article II, Division 3 of the Code of Ordinances, relative to the donation of adjudicated property acquired by the Parish under LA.R.S. 47:2236 et seq., to authorize the donation of property to the City of Shreveport, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

#### **WORK SESSION MINUTES**

It was **moved by Mr. Jones**, seconded by Mr. Cothran, *that the Work Session Minutes from March 31, 2025* be ratified. Motion carried.

#### **RESOLUTIONS**

It was **moved by Mrs. Gage-Watts**, seconded by Mr. Atkins, *that Resolution No. 21 of 2025, a resolution approving the holding of an election in Caddo Parish Fire District No. 8, State of Louisiana, on Saturday, October 11, 2025, to authorize the continuation of special taxes and the renewal of a service charge therein* be adopted. Mrs. Gage-Watts' motion carried unanimously by those Commissioners who were present with Commissioners Kracman and J. Young being absent (2).

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 21 OF 2025**

BY THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION:

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE HOLDING OF AN ELECTION IN CADDO PARISH FIRE DISTRICT NUMBER EIGHT, STATE OF LOUISIANA, ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2025, TO AUTHORIZE THE CONTINUATION OF SPECIAL TAXES AND THE RENEWAL OF A SERVICE CHARGE THEREIN.

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Caddo Parish Fire District Number Eight, State of Louisiana (the "Governing Authority"), acting as the governing authority of Caddo Parish Fire District Number Eight, State of Louisiana (the "District"), adopted a resolution on March 20, 2025, calling a special election in the District on Saturday, October 11, 2025, to authorize the continuation of special taxes and the renewal of a service charge therein; and

WHEREAS, the governing authority of the District has requested that the Caddo Parish Commission, acting as the governing authority of the Parish of Caddo, State of Louisiana, give its consent and authority for the District to hold the aforesaid election, and in the event that the election carries to



Chris Kracman	_____	_____	<u>  X  </u>	_____
Greg Young	<u>  X  </u>	_____	_____	_____
Victor L. Thomas	<u>  X  </u>	_____	_____	_____
John-Paul Young	_____	_____	<u>  X  </u>	_____
Roy Burrell	<u>  X  </u>	_____	_____	_____
Steffon Jones	<u>  X  </u>	_____	_____	_____
Stormy Gage-Watts	<u>  X  </u>	_____	_____	_____
Grace Anne Blake	<u>  X  </u>	_____	_____	_____
John E. Atkins	<u>  X  </u>	_____	_____	_____
Ronald L. Cothran	<u>  X  </u>	_____	_____	_____
Ed Lazarus	<u>  X  </u>	_____	_____	_____
Kenneth "Ken" Epperson	<u>  X  </u>	_____	_____	_____

And the resolution was declared adopted on this, the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of April, 2025.

_____ /s/ Jeff Everson Clerk	_____ /s/ Stormy Gage-Watts President
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It was **moved by Mr. Epperson**, seconded by Mr. Jones, *that Resolution No. 22 of 2025, a resolution opposing cuts to national aid programs, and otherwise providing with respect thereto* be adopted.

Mr. Epperson gave the definition of monarchy and discussed the roles of a monarch and nobility. He then talked about 1775 and the establishment of the Continental Army under General George Washington. Mr. Epperson stated that the Continental Army defeated the British and the monarchical form of government. Article 7 of the Constitution's First Amendment, ratified in 1791, guarantees freedom of religion, speech, and the press. The amendment also secures the right to peacefully assemble and petition the government. He suggested to those who disagreed with these amendments to read and interpret the Constitution for themselves.

**Substitute motion by Mr. Jones**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *that the following resolutions be adopted:*

- *Resolution No. 22 of 2025, a resolution opposing cuts to national aid programs, and otherwise providing with respect*
- *Resolution No. 23 of 2025, a resolution opposing the mass firings of federal employees, and otherwise providing with respect thereto*
- *Resolution No. 24 of 2025, a resolution opposing tariffs against trading partners, and otherwise providing with respect thereto*

Mr. Atkins reflected on the size of the current national government compared to the Founding Fathers' vision and the consistent overspending of government funds, exceeding revenues. The significant nation debt poses a threat to the country's well-being and future.

Mr. G. Young said that the Founding Fathers also did not envision "me sitting up here. Never envisioned Black folks having voting rights; never envisioned Blake people being free". He raised concerns regarding the "gaps in the Constitution" and cautioned reflecting on the vision of the Founding Fathers. He expressed a refusal to passively accept the current state of affairs. He reflected on past pride in serving America in the military and how the current events caused him heartbreak. I am not going back to Jim Crow; I am not going back, he said.

Mr. Burrell agreed with Mr. G. Young and refuses to return back to Jim Crow. He said that there seems to be a nefarious movement attempting to silence local officials from using public forums to discuss harmful policies. Mr. Burrell said the new policies have been targeting and attacking the minority community and discriminatory practices across various sectors. Mr. Burrell said that he is faced with criticism and disparagement, but refuses to relinquish his right to express his view. This is not for me, this is for the future generations, he said.

Mr. Cothran reflected on his time in the military and serving the "greatest country in the whole world". He emphasized on the importance of mutual respect and understanding with differing viewpoints. "We are not in the same boat, but we are in the same storm. Some have yachts; some have canoes; and some are grounded. Just be kind to whoever you can", he said.

Mrs. Blake respects diverse experiences influencing decision-making processes around this horseshoe. She talked about women having the right to vote after men, and how there are ongoing struggles for women to this day. Mrs. Blake raised concerns about taxpayer money wastes and theft. She said that, as a business owner, she has suffered everyday for four years due to inflation. Mrs. Blake will be voting no on all three resolutions.

Mrs. Gage-Watts said that there was theft of \$800B. She also talked about the cuts to national aid programs and how it will negatively impact individuals, community leaders, and federal employees. Mrs.

Gage-Watts said that this budget cuts exacerbate homeless problems and food insecurity. She said that she will be voting yes on all three resolutions.

**Call for the Question by Mr. Lazarus**, seconded by Mr. Jones. Motion carried by acclamation.

At this time, Mr. Jones' motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Thomas, and G. Young (7). NAYS: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, and Lazarus (3). ABSENT: Commissioners Kracman and J. Young (2). ABSTAIN: None (0).

## RESOLUTION NO. 22 OF 2025

BY THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION:

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING CUTS TO NATIONAL AID PROGRAMS,  
AND OTHERWISE PROVIDING WITH RESPECT THERETO

WHEREAS, the current presidential administration has made cuts to, or indicated an intention to cut the following programs; and

Medicaid  
Medicare  
SNAP  
Head Start  
Department of Education Programs  
Social Security  
Veteran Programs  
Department of Defense

WHEREAS, these cuts will be detrimental to U.S. citizens, Caddo Parish citizens, included, devastating programs upon which children, the elderly, veterans and military, and persons with special needs rely.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Caddo Parish Commission in due, legal and regular session convened that the Caddo Parish Commission hereby opposes cuts to the aforementioned programs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution will be forwarded to the President of the United States, the Louisiana federal congressional delegation, the Caddo delegation to the Louisiana Legislature, and the Louisiana Police Jury Association.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution is effective immediately upon its passage.

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

Neuman, S. (2025, March 11). "What Is Medicaid And Why Is It A Republican Target for Cuts?" CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/26/politics/medicaid-proposed-cuts-what-matters/index.html> Accessed March 11, 2025

Henry, T. (2025, March 6). "Medicare Pay Cuts: How They Threaten Patients' Access to Care." AMA. <https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/medicare-medicare/medicare-pay-cuts-how-they-threaten-patients-access-care> Accessed March 11, 2025

Bergh, K. (2025, February 24). "Millions of Low-Income Households Would Lose Food Aid Under Proposed House Republican SNAP Cuts." Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/millions-of-low-income-households-would-lose-food-aid-under-proposed-house> Accessed March 11, 2025

Fritz, W. (2025, March 6). "In aftermath of funding freeze, fears linger at Head Start program." The Wisconsin Independent. <https://wisconsinindependent.com/education/in-aftermath-of-funding-freeze-fears-linger-at-head-start-program/> Accessed March 11, 2025

Whiteside, S. (2025, March 7). "What happens if the Department of Education is abolished?" NewsNation. <https://www.newsnationnow.com/us-news/education/what-happens-education-department-eliminated/> Accessed March 11, 2025

Dayen, D. (2025, March 6). "How Social Security Administration Cuts Affect You." The American Prospect. <https://prospect.org/health/2025-03-06-how-social-security-administration-cuts-affect-you/> Accessed March

11, 2025

Rabin, R. and Nehamas, N. (2025, March 9). "Chaos at the V.A.: Inside the DOGE Cuts Disrupting the Veterans Agency." *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/09/us/politics/veterans-affairs-doge-cuts.html># Accessed March 11, 2025

Bohannon, M. (2025, February 21). "What We Know About Pentagon Cuts: Defense Department Announces Thousands of Layoffs—Starting Next Week." *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/mollybohannon/2025/02/21/what-we-know-about-pentagon-cuts-defense-department-announces-thousands-of-layoffs-starting-next-week/> Accessed March 11, 2025

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 23 OF 2025**

BY THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION:

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE MASS FIRINGS OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES, AND OTHERWISE PROVIDING WITH RESPECT THERETO

WHEREAS, the current presidential administration has initiated mass firings of federal employees in their first or second year of service; and

WHEREAS, these firings were not based on unsatisfactory employee performance or other legal reasons for which federal civil service employees can be fired; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Office of Special Counsel has recommended a halt to the firing of such workers; and

WHEREAS, there are several pending appeals of these firings to the Merit Systems Protections Board and several lawsuits against the administration seeking to reverse the firings.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Caddo Parish Commission in due, legal and regular session convened that the Caddo Parish Commission hereby opposes the mass firings of federal employees which have been initiated by the current presidential administration.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution is effective immediately upon its passage.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution will be forwarded to the President of the United States, the Louisiana federal congressional delegation, the Caddo delegation to the Louisiana Legislature, and the Louisiana Police Jury Association.

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

Queen, J. and Weissner, D. (2025, February 13). "Explainer: Are Trump's Mass Firings of Federal Workers Legal?" *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/are-trumps-mass-firings-federal-workers-legal-2025-02-13/> Accessed March 11, 2025

(2025, February 25). "Office of Special Counsel Has Recommended Halting Termination of Probationary Federal Workers." *Civil Service Strong*. <https://www.civilservicestrong.org/update/probationary-employee-update> Accessed March 11, 2025

Weissner, D. (2025, March 6). "US Federal Workers Hit Back at Trump Mass Firings with Class Action Complaints." *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/legal/us-federal-workers-hit-back-trump-mass-firings-with-class-action-complaints-2025-03-06/> Accessed March 11, 2005

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 24 OF 2025**

BY THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION:

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING TARIFFS AGAINST TRADING PARTNERS, AND OTHERWISE PROVIDING WITH RESPECT THERETO

WHEREAS, the current presidential administration has imposed trade tariffs on China, Mexico and Canada; and

WHEREAS, several of the imposed tariffs have been reversed; and

WHEREAS, the fluctuation on this tariff imposition has caused great uncertainty in the U.S. economy; for example, on March 10, 2025, the stock market plunged, “which saw the Dow Jones Industrial Average drop about 2% — more than erasing the gains since President Trump’s inauguration. The Nasdaq lost 4%”; and

WHEREAS, The Economic Policy Uncertainty Index “stands at its highest level since the pandemic,” indicating a drop-in consumer and business confidence, and creating chaos that could lead to a recession.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Caddo Parish Commission in due, legal and regular session convened that the Caddo Parish Commission hereby opposes the haphazard imposition of tariffs by the current presidential administration.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution is effective immediately upon its passage.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution will be forwarded to the President of the United States, the Louisiana federal congressional delegation, the Caddo delegation to the Louisiana Legislature, and the Louisiana Police Jury Association.

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

Wolf, Z. (2025, February 26). “How Trump’s Reversals on Tariffs Could Impact the Economy.” NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2025/03/11/nx-s1-5323098/trump-economy-uncertainty-tariffs-confidence> Accessed March 11, 2025

Neuman, S. (2025, March 11). “How Trump’s Reversals on Tariffs Could Impact the Economy.” NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2025/03/11/nx-s1-5323098/trump-economy-uncertainty-tariffs-confidence> Accessed March 11, 2025

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

It was **moved by Mrs. Gage-Watts**, seconded by Mr. Cothran, *to accept the additional nominations for the Youth Advisory Council Members. Motion carried unanimously by those Commissioners who were present with Commissioners Kracman and J. Young being absent (2).*


There was no New Business, so the Commission moved onto Communiques & Committee Reports.

#### **COMMUNIQUES & COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- Mr. Cothran announced that Southern Hills will have a litter pickup on April 17 from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon. CARE (Cedar Grove) will have a cleanup on April 12 from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon.
- Mr. Burrell announced that the NAACP Officers will be instilled on April 9 at 6:00 p.m. The Alpha Esquire Beautillion will be held on Saturday at 6:00 p.m.
- Mr. Epperson announced that the Pines Road Area Business Association (PRABA) will host a job fair on May 1 from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 5:24 p.m.

  
Michelle Nations  
Assistant to the Commission Clerk

  
Stormy Gage-Watts  
President