

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
NGO & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT JOINT COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 4TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2025

The Caddo Parish NGO & Economic Development Joint Committee met in legal session on the above date at 12:00 noon, in the Government Plaza Chambers, with the following members were present constituting a quorum: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Burrell, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Lazarus, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (9). ABSENT: Commissioner Cothran (1).

Mr. Lazarus gave the invocation, and Mr. Atkins led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance. There were no Agenda Additions nor any Public Comments, so the Committee moved onto New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Receive Administrative presentation of 2026 NGO Applications*

Commissioners received packets with application summaries, score sheets, detailed narratives, and other supporting documents from organizations requesting funding from the Parish.

The NGO applicants were broken down into two categories—social welfare and education. There were a total of sixty seven organizations to apply for funding, with a total request of over \$2.6M.

Eighteen organizations applied for an economic development grant funding, with a total request of \$785k.

Mr. G. Young suggested that the discussions be separated between the two committees.

Mr. Thomas wanted to know if there were any outstanding applications. Mrs. Jalisa Thomas, Grant Coordinator, said that there were a few organizations and reminders were sent to them to complete their applications.

Mr. Thomas then wanted to know the funding sources. Administrator Bryant said that the funding source for NGOs is riverboat revenues, and video poker for Economic Development. Mr. J. Young then wanted to know the available amount for NGOs. Mrs. Hayley Barnett said that the revenues for riverboat are about \$800k, with about \$600k available. She further explained that anything above that would have to be transferred from Oil & Gas.

Mr. Epperson wanted to know if this also includes sports wage betting revenues.

Mrs. Gage-Watts wanted to know the policy or guidelines for riverboat appropriations. Administrator Bryant explained that it would have to serve someone who is poor, needy, or low-income; if it is an economic development entity, then an economic impact is needed to show that there would be equal or greater revenues coming back to the community.

Mr. G. Young wanted to know what kind of businesses are being funded. Ms. Thomas said that it is a mixture of festivals, sporting events, etc. She gave an example of CoHab, who helps with business development and adds small businesses to the Parish. Attorney Frazier said that the organizations who are requesting economic development funding have to provide an economic impact study.

Mr. G. Young suggested inviting organizations, particularly those in the "other" category, to present their results and demonstrate their economic impact. Administrator Bryant said that Administration follows the recommendation of the Committee, and the decision on the funding is made by the Committee. She also suggested inviting everyone to attend to give a presentation, not just those organizations in the "other" category.

Administrator Bryant also requested that the NGO and Economic Development Committees meet separately to go through the applications. She also requested that the scores be submitted by September 15, 2025.

Mr. J. Young suggested that the Committee members review the narratives and applications for each organization, and write down any questions.

It was **moved by Mr. G. Young**, seconded by Mr. Thomas, *to invite all organizations to attend an Economic Development Committee meeting and provide a 3 minute presentation on September 16, 2025.*

Substitute motion by Mr. Atkins, seconded by Mr. Lazarus, *to review, score, then invite organizations if there are any further questions.*

A friendly amendment was made by Mrs. Gage-Watts *to review the applications first, then invite all of the organizations to present.* Mr. Atkins' declined the friendly amendment.

At this time, Mr. Atkins' motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES:

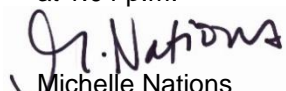
Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Gage-Watts, and Lazarus (4). NAYS: Commissioners Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (3). ABSENT: Commissioner Cothran (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mrs. Gage-Watts**, seconded by Mr. G. Young, *to set the deadline for the submission of the Economic Development application scores by September 15, 2025.* Motion carried unanimously by those members of the Economic Development Committee with Commissioner Cothran being absent (1).

- *Discuss timeline and set meeting date for recommendations from Economic Development & Appropriations Committee*

Mr. Thomas, Chair of the NGO Committee, encouraged members to actively participate in events and engage with organizations to better assess their impact. Mrs. Gage-Watts agreed and emphasized that the money being allocated belongs to the people and should be redistributed back into the community effectively.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 1:04 p.m.



Michelle Nations
Assistant Commission Clerk