

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION  
HELD ON THE 30th DAY OF OCTOBER, 2025

The Caddo Parish Commission met in a Special Session, on the above date, at 3:30 p.m., in the Government Plaza Chambers, 505 Travis Street, Shreveport, with Mrs. Gage-Watts, presiding, and the following members in attendance constituting a quorum: Commissioners Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Kracman, Lazarus, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (10). ABSENT: Commissioners Atkins and Blake (2).

The invocation was given by Mr. Jones, and Mr. Epperson led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance. There were no Citizens Comments.

**NEW BUSINESS**

At this time, Mrs. Bryant conducted a presentation to the Commission with regards to the Budget.

In compliance with Article VI, Section 6.02 of the Caddo Parish Home Rule Charter, the Caddo Parish Administration is pleased to submit its proposed 2026 budget for consideration and adoption by the Caddo Parish Commission. The annual budget represents one of the most important documents the Commission will enact. It reflects the resources, strategies, and goals of the Parish in delivering public services at a quality level that Caddo citizens have come to expect. This budget message discusses the priorities of Caddo Parish and how those priorities are reflected in the budget.

The budget document represents a balanced budget for 2026, reflective of prudent and sound financial management and the optimization of taxpayers' dollars invested toward the Caddo Parish government's operation. This budget addresses the Parish's most urgent operational needs, capital improvement initiatives, support of Parish agencies, economic development, and social programs. The 2026 budget is a conservative budget that preserves funding for essential services which Caddo citizens rely upon.

The proposed budget totals \$143,043,662 and meets the projected needs of all Parish operations, capital improvements, and debt service requirements. The 2026 budget reflects a \$24k increase in expenditures from the 2025 adopted budget. Total revenues for the 2026 budget are \$116,288,970, an increase of 1% from 2025, resulting from an increase in property taxes and a decrease in intergovernmental revenues relating to ARPA funds. Further analysis of revenues and expenditures begins on page 14 under the Budget Overview.

**Budget Points**

The 2026 budget represents a sustainable work plan that positions Caddo Parish to better achieve its mission and priorities while recognizing changing economic conditions. The 2026 budget addresses the following budgetary impacts:

- **Declining Population/Revenue Impact:** Caddo Parish has lost about 7% of its population since 2010. While Caddo Parish has experienced growth in its older population, younger individuals and families are declining. This decline in population impacts the ability to recruit staff, fewer homes being built, and less business development. All these factors affect the growth rate of the Parish's tax revenue. Tax revenue is not growing at the same rate as expenditures, which indicates that, at some point, expenditures will exceed available revenues.
- **Local Economy:** The economy of Caddo Parish and Northwest Louisiana continues to have its challenges, although it remains an important factor in Louisiana's overall economic health. The local economy has stabilized from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and is expected to remain stable for 2026, but there has been limited economic growth. Ad valorem taxes make up the most significant portion of recurring Parish revenues, and the limited growth in the economy would normally affect property valuations. However, while there has been limited economic growth, there has been an increase in property valuations due to an increase in the sales price of existing homes. Maintaining property tax revenues at a consistent level will allow the Parish of Caddo to maintain its strong financial position while prudently administering its capital needs. Sales tax revenues have also increased due to inflation.

Caddo Parish collaborates with the Northwest Louisiana Economic Partnership (NLEP) to bring business developments to Caddo Parish. There are active projects in the pipeline, and we look forward to meaningful progress in 2026. In 2025, Ascentek announced a \$50M investment to expand the manufacturing and distribution facility in Shreveport. Ascentek plans to build a 270,000 square foot

manufacturing assistance facility and enhance operations at its existing production and distribution facility in Shreveport. Ascentek plans to build a 270,000 square foot manufacturing assistance facility expected to create 91 direct new jobs in manufacturing, production support, and business administration, while also retaining 105 current positions. Louisiana Economic Development estimates the project will result in an additional 247 indirect new jobs, for a total of 338 potential new jobs in the Northwest Region.

Also in 2025, SkyWest, the nation's largest regional airline carrier, has selected Shreveport Regional Airport as its newest maintenance base and facility to help support its fleet of nearly 500 regional aircraft. The SkyWest facility is expected to create 150 direct new jobs with an average annual salary of \$70,000—about 27% above the parish average wage. Louisiana Economic Development estimates the project will result in 375 indirect new jobs, bringing a potential 525 new jobs in the Northwest Region.

Also, Ward II Industrial Park, a 900+ acre industrial site in Vivian, LA, has been named as one of Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC)'s Site Ready industrial development locations. Ward II Industrial Park is the only gold-tiered designated site in the United States.

- **Maintaining Financial Health:** The 2026 budget follows the Parish's financial policies, which include maintaining the Reserve Trust Fund, the Parish's "rainy day fund," and prudent fund balance levels. For 2026, the Parish will transfer \$4 million from the Oil and Gas Fund to the Reserve Trust Fund, increasing the fund balance to \$49 million.

Department Heads and their teams have continued to work diligently to effectively administer the departmental budgets and deliver quality services to Caddo citizens.

Through continuous budget reviews by Department Heads, the Director of Finance, the Parish Administration, and the Caddo Parish Commission, the estimated year-end overall fund balance for the 2026 Budget is approximately \$211M, representing 147% of total expenditures.

- **Criminal Justice Issues:** Criminal Justice expenditures comprise over 25% of the 2026 budget. The 2026 budget includes a \$4.6 million operating deficit in the Juvenile Justice Fund, a \$1.6 million operating deficit in the Detention Facilities Fund, and a \$5.5 million operating deficit in the General Fund. These deficits result from increased criminal justice costs for Juvenile Services, the Caddo Correctional Center (CCC), the District Attorney's Office, and the District Court. Increased inmate medical expenses at CCC, lack of funding for juvenile justice, increased costs for Assistant District Attorneys (ADAs), and a decline in revenues for court costs have all contributed to the deficits. Additionally, citizens are concerned about violent crimes and their overall safety. The Parish struggles to address public safety and criminal justice with the current funding. A long-term solution is needed to address this growing issue. Caddo Parish officials have worked closely with leaders in the criminal justice community, including the Sheriff, DA, and Shreveport Police, to address this ongoing problem.
- **Walter B. Nature Center Rehabilitation Project:** In 2022, the voters in Caddo Parish approved a \$20 million bond initiative to rehabilitate the Walter B. Jacobs (WBJ) Nature Center to construct a new 24,000-square-foot facility. Caddo Parish broke ground on the project in 2024 and anticipates opening January 2026. The WBJ project will transform the former nature center into a more dynamic and interactive educational facility and will benefit the entire region. The new complex will feature over 12,000 square feet of interactive exhibits, classroom spaces, a gift shop, a 2,500-square-foot bird aviary, and an additional 8,000 square feet of full-service event space. The event space can be used for weddings, receptions, conferences, and other events. Caddo Parish is beyond thankful to the citizens of Caddo Parish for allowing the Parish to embark upon this project that will undoubtedly enhance the quality of life in Caddo Parish and beyond.

### Financial Condition

Despite the population decline and limited economic growth, the Caddo Parish Commission remains in good financial condition. There are adequate fund balance levels to offset revenue shortfalls, which demonstrates the financial strength of the Parish. The ending 2026 fund balance is estimated at \$211 million, providing ample funds if there is a negative economic event.

Although the Parish has strong reserves, there are some areas of concern. Those funds with criminal justice expenditures — Juvenile Justice, Detention Facilities, and the General Fund — are using fund balances to offset revenue shortfalls. The continual increase in medical costs and the rise in the number of inmates at CCC strain the reserve levels in the Detention Facility Fund while also impacting the costs in the General Fund relating to the District Court and the District Attorney's Office.

### **Budget Organization**

This budget document is divided into several sections, with the four major sections being Narratives, Budget Overview, Capital Budget, and Fund Budgets. The Narratives section includes a description of each department and all Parish-funded agencies. Most departments provided a list of accomplishments for 2025, as well as goals and objectives for the 2026 budget year. The Budget Overview section provides the reader with a “snapshot” of the Parish's 2026 budget. The Capital Budget section represents the Parish's Capital Improvement Plan for 2026 and lists the planned projects for the year. Line-item appropriation details are included in the individual fund sections of the budget document.

### **Budget Overview**

The 2026 budget is balanced because revenues and fund balances meet 2026 expenditures. Fund balances are appropriated only to the extent that appropriations exceed estimated revenues. The recommendations included in the budget are guided by key principles of sound financial practices. For example, ongoing revenues are used for ongoing expenditures, while one-time revenues support one-time expenditures. The following is an analysis of major revenues, expenditures, and fund balance reserves impacting the 2026 budget.

#### **Revenues**

Projections for our most important revenues, property, and sales taxes are based on estimates of future economic conditions. The economic outlook for the coming year affects revenue estimates, which determine the amount of funds available for spending. As noted, Caddo Parish's economic outlook is stable, and hopefully the Parish will experience some significant economic gains in 2026. Accordingly, the following revenue forecasts are based on known economic trends.

- **Ad Valorem "Property" Taxes** - The 2026 budget includes an increase of 4.2% in property tax revenues from \$58.7 million in 2025 to \$61.2 million in 2026. Property tax revenues are projected to increase due to an increase in the overall assessment resulting from higher prices for existing home sales. An increase of 4% is expected for property tax assessments from 2025 to 2026.
- **Sales Taxes** - Sales taxes are budgeted to increase by \$5.5 million to \$16.5 million in 2026. Sales tax revenue has been impacted by inflation and increased construction. Sales tax revenues fluctuate widely with large upswings and downswings. Given the unpredictable nature of this revenue source, the Parish conservatively estimates sales tax revenues.
- **Intergovernmental Revenue** - Intergovernmental revenues are expected to decrease by 10%, resulting from a decrease in ARPA revenues. ARPA revenues are deferred and only recognized when spent. The Parish received \$46.6 million between 2021 and 2022. In 2025 the Parish budgeted to recognize \$10 million of the ARPA revenues compared to the 2026 budget of \$5 million. The \$5 million will be used for Parish capital projects and agency projects for local fire and water districts.
- **Other Revenue** - The Parish has estimated \$2.5 million for its oil and gas revenue for 2026, an increase of \$1.5 million from 2025. Both oil and gas prices and production have increased, so the Parish expects these revenues to increase. Gaming revenue is expected to decrease slightly due to fewer gaming customers. Rents and interest earned are expected to increase due to increased returns on the Parish's investment balances. The Parish's other revenue sources, such as state-shared revenues, are expected to remain stable in 2026.

#### **Expenditures**

The Parish's 2026 proposed expenditures are \$143 million, an increase of \$24k over the 2025 budget. The expenditures are stable from year to year with no significant change. A summary of each fund's budget is detailed on page 15. The following items address the factors associated with the change:

- **Salaries** - Increases in operating expenses are typically associated with changes in compensation, benefits, and staffing levels. The 2026 budget provides for a 2% cost-of-living adjustment and up to a 3% merit increase. The total budgeted positions, including parish-funded agencies, is 438. There is a net increase of one position for the 2026 budget. The additional position is an administrative specialist

for Walter B. Jacobs Park.

- **Health Insurance** - The premiums for the group medical program are projected to increase by 6%. This is attributable to the number of healthcare costs. Claim payments for 2025 are estimated at \$6 million. In 2026, we will continue to analyze the insurance program to determine methods to reduce costs while providing affordable benefits. The 6% increase in premiums affects both the employees and the Parish.
- **Retirement** - The Parish's contribution to the Parochial Employees Retirement System (PERS) and the Caddo Parish Employees' Retirement System (CPERS) will remain 11%. The CPERS rate is established based on the rate established for PERS by the PERS Board of Directors. The retirement contribution reached a high of 16.75% in 2013. Most State retirement plans in Louisiana are increasing employer contributions, not decreasing; this is a testament to the strength of the retirement system for Parish employees.
- **Criminal Justice** - Revenues in the Juvenile Justice Fund are anticipated to be \$5.4 million with expenditures of \$10.2 million, resulting in appropriations exceeding revenues by \$4.8 million. The Detention Facilities Fund has estimated revenues of \$11.8 million with estimated expenditures of \$13.3 million, resulting in an operating deficit of \$1.5 million. The General Fund has estimated total revenues of \$12.7 million with estimated expenditures of \$18.3 million, resulting in an operating deficit of \$5.6 million. The Criminal Justice Fund will provide an operating subsidy of \$3.5 million to the Juvenile Justice Fund, \$1 million to the Detention Facilities Fund, and \$5 million to the General Fund to offset these deficits. The rededication of the Public Works property tax millage has allowed the Parish to allocate more funds to the Criminal Justice Fund to provide operating subsidies to those funds with significant criminal justice costs. These subsidies allow for a balanced budget in those funds with criminal justice expenditures.
- **Prison Operations** - Expenditures related to the operations of the Caddo Correctional Center (CCC) are estimated to increase by 3%. The increase is due to increased costs for prisoner medical care, especially costs associated with prescription drugs and medical staff salary increases.

### **Capital Projects**

The Parish decreased the Capital Outlay Program in 2026 by \$6.8 million. The capital program decreased due to reduced appropriations to the new Walter B. Jacobs Nature Center. Additionally, there are fewer ARPA projects budgeted for 2026. To successfully complete the 2025 capital improvement projects, the Parish proposes a combination of funding mechanisms, including the following funding sources: ARPA, General Fund, Oil and Gas Fund, and fund balances from various special revenue funds. This funding approach allows the Parish to accomplish approximately \$34.5 million in essential capital projects.

### **Fund Balance Reserves**

One of the most important elements of a sound, comprehensive budget is to evaluate the impact of projected revenue and appropriations on fund balance reserves. Fund balances are important to meet unanticipated expenditure requirements, major revenue shortfalls, or a major emergency such as a natural disaster. The fund balance for 2026 is expected to increase by \$6 million from the 2025 adopted fund balance of \$205 million. The increase is associated with higher-than-expected sales tax, oil and gas, and interest revenues in 2024, which resulted in higher ending fund balances than budgeted. Most of the remaining projects will be funded with fund balance reserves and Oil and Gas Revenues. Capital improvements comprise 24% of the Parish's 2026 budget. The five-year Capital Improvement Plan identifies the future capital needs of the Parish. Most of the capital improvements are related to roads, bridges, parks, and building renovations.

### **Future Outlook**

Caddo Parish's local economy will experience business growth and development with the new Amazon Fulfillment Center and continued expansion by SLB and GE/Prolec. The oil and gas industry is declining, but property values have increased. The future of the Parish remains promising, although we have our share of challenges. We will continue to work with our state, parish, and other local partners to support smart growth, infrastructure, and other initiatives that encourage and spark economic development in our area. We remain optimistic that we will continue to use the Parish's resources wisely to build our economy, encourage business development and expansion., and promote technological advancement by pursuing businesses that help us positively transform our community.

### **Financial Awards**

Caddo Parish was once again awarded the Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the 2025 budget year. The Parish also received the GFOA's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for 2023 and we are awaiting results for the 2024 award. It is a pleasure to report that the Parish's 2024 financial audit resulted in a favorable report with a healthy fund balance. The financial results indicate the continuous efforts toward achieving excellence in government financial accounting standards.

The Administration will continue to exercise sound fiscal management across all departmental budgets to ensure the Parish is prepared to respond to changing service demands while utilizing existing resources. The overall spending forecast is projected to be consistent with priorities and needs.

### Acknowledgements

Preparing any organization's budget is usually an enormous task, and this budget is no exception. It takes the entire organization, funded agencies, citizens, and the Caddo Parish Commission to complete the budget process. On every team, there are "stand-out performers" who lead the way and are instrumental in getting things done. Accordingly, it is befitting to extend appreciation to Mrs. Hayley B. Barnett - Director of Finance, Mrs. Stephanie Rico-Griffith - Assistant Director of Finance, and all members of the Finance Team, for exceptional management of Caddo Parish finances and the preparation and organization of the 2026 budget. Additionally, department directors are to be commended for their ability to prioritize the Parish's most urgent expenditure and capital needs.

### Conclusion

The Parish of Caddo is financially sound and practices prudent financial management. The 2026 budget reflects the Caddo Parish Commission's financial discipline to ensure funds are available for current and future community needs. The Commission's leadership has allowed the Parish to better align resources toward the Parish's most important priorities.

Thank you for supporting our efforts to effectively serve the Caddo Parish community.

/s/ Erica R. Bryant  
Erica R. Bryant  
Administrator & CEO

/s/ Hayley B. Barnett  
Hayley B. Barnett  
Director of Finance

**It was moved by Mrs. Gage-Watts, seconded by Mr. Lazarus, that a public hearing for the 2026 Operating & Capital Improvements Budget ordinances be set for November 20, 2025 at 3:30 p.m., and those ordinances will be considered for final adoption at a special meeting scheduled for December 2, 2025 at 3:30 p.m. Motion carried unanimously with Commissioners Atkins and Blake being absent (2).**

At this time, Commission Clerk, Mr. Jeff Everson introduced the Budget Ordinance Nos. 6568 to 6595 of 2025.

It was **moved by Mr. Epperson**, seconded by Mr. Thomas, *that Special Resolution proclaiming Veterans Celebration Week* be adopted. Motion carried unanimously with Commissioners Atkins and Blake being absent (2).

### PROCLAMATION VETERANS CELEBRATION WEEK

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission joins the Citizens of Caddo Parish in great respect, admiration, and the utmost gratitude for all of the men and women who have selflessly served our country and this community in the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, the contributions and sacrifices of the men and women who served in the Armed Forces have been vital in maintaining the freedoms and way of life enjoyed by our citizens and the Caddo Parish Commission seeks to honor these individuals who have paid the high price for freedom by placing themselves in harm's way for the good of all; and

WHEREAS, Caddo Parish, is designated an Operation Green Light participant with the National Association of Counties and in keeping with our longstanding tradition of encouraging local governments, businesses and public entities to post 'Thank You' and 'Welcome Veterans' signs during the week of November 3rd through November 11th, we are also asking that a green light be displayed on all municipal and public facilities, as well as residential and commercial windows that are visible to the public in recognition of the contributions and sacrifices of the men and women who served and who are still active in the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, public and private school systems, primary, secondary and higher education institutions are asked to schedule educational programs, whereby veterans and military personnel may serve as guest speakers. Special recognition to our veterans at all religious institutions during religious services is also encouraged; and

WHEREAS, all citizens of Caddo Parish and the Northwest Louisiana region are asked to honor our veterans, for protecting our American freedoms. Among the ways that local Veterans will be honored include the public facilities such as the Bakowski Bridge of Lights and the Caddo Parish Courthouse being illuminated in green, an Honor Ceremony to be held at the historic Municipal Auditorium on Saturday, November 15th and a Veterans Appreciation Day and Parade at the State Fair of Louisiana on Sunday, November 16th where admission and parking will be free for all Veterans, active military and their families and the Veteran's Parade begins at 2 p.m.; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Caddo Parish Commission meeting in legal and session convened during the month of October does hereby proclaim November 3rd through November 11th, 2025 as

**'Veterans Celebration Week'**

in Caddo Parish, Louisiana, and urges all citizens in the region to celebrate the 15th Anniversary of 'Veterans Celebration Week' honoring our veterans and their families.

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mr. J. Young, *that Special Resolution honoring Carry Camp* be adopted. Motion carried unanimously with Commissioners Atkins and Blake being absent (2).

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION  
CARRY CAMP**

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission desires to recognize and honor individuals whose lives and works exemplify faith, leadership, and service to others; and

WHEREAS, Cary Camp has dedicated more than four decades to the field of radio broadcasting, contributing to the growth, development, and continued excellence of radio media in the Shreveport-Bossier community and the Ark-La-Tex region; and

WHEREAS, throughout his career, Cary has demonstrated outstanding leadership, guiding stations through industry transitions, technological advancements, and cultural shifts while maintaining a strong commitment to local programming and community connection; and

WHEREAS, Cary has served as a mentor, advocate, and support system for countless broadcasters, announcers, producers, sales professionals, and media personnel, helping many launch, strengthen, and sustain successful careers in the radio industry; and

WHEREAS, his dedication to uplifting local voices, promoting regional culture, and providing platforms for community information, entertainment, and inspiration has had a lasting positive impact throughout the community; and

WHEREAS, under his leadership, stations have continued to serve as trusted sources for music, local news, public affairs programming, faith content, and emergency communication, reflecting his core belief in radio as a public service and community pillar; and

WHEREAS, Cary Camp is respected not only for his professional excellence, but for his integrity, kindness, humility, and unwavering commitment to treating others with dignity and respect; and

WHEREAS, his legacy is reflected not only in the stations he has led, but in the voices he has empowered, the careers he has nurtured, and the lives he has touched throughout the decades; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Caddo Parish Commission does hereby recognize and honor Mr. Cary Camp for his remarkable contributions and service to the community; and in addition to this Resolution being a part of the official record of the Caddo Parish Commission, that a commemorative copy shall be presented to Cary Camp in grateful acknowledgment of his decades of service, mentorship, and leadership and an expression of the Commission's highest commendation and warmest wishes for continued success and blessings in all of his endeavors.

There being no more business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 4:03 p.m.



Michelle Nations  
Assistant Commission Clerk



Stormy Gage-Watts  
President