

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 20th DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2025

The Caddo Parish Economic Development Committee met in legal session on the above date at 12:00 p.m., in the 8th Floor Administrative Conference Room, with the following members present constituting a quorum: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Gage-Watts, Lazarus, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (6). ABSENT: Commissioners Cothran and Lazarus (2).

The invocation and Pledge of Allegiance were not given during the meeting. There were no Agenda Additions, nor Public Comments, so the Committee moved to New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Discussion and presentation from Visit Shreveport-Bossier*

Mrs. Stacy Brown, Executive Director of the Shreveport Bossier Tourism Bureau, presented an overview of the Shreveport-Bossier Film Commission, which has now been operating for one full year. The Film Commission serves as the first point of contact for productions considering the area, assisting with: location scouting (e.g., specific types of houses, cemeteries, unique sites), assessing workforce capacity (crew, production assistants, etc.), and connecting productions with local vendors.

She introduced Mr. Wade Marshall, who has been building a comprehensive database of film crew and vendors. He also worked to upgrade the website and will be implementing Reel Scout – a producer-facing database platform used by major markets, joined the board of the statewide film organization (Film Louisiana) and obtained AFCI accreditation, strengthening the local commission's credibility, and traveled with the Louisiana Film Association to Los Angeles to meet producers and promote the region.

The office has also been working on addressing the loss of crew after earlier slowdowns by rebuilding a local talent pool. They partner with Robinson Film Center and others to provide industry training, meet-ups, and entry-level opportunities (e.g., production assistants).

Mrs. Brown also mentioned that the scope has expanded from just film into broader entertainment, focusing on live music and performances to activate downtown spaces and other venues. Recent examples include live entertainment at Noble Savage and work with Caddo Common Park, where grants are helping bring regular performances.

Mr. Atkins thanked Mrs. Brown for coming before the Committee, but wanted to know why they were here today. Mrs. Brown explained that this was both an updated and funding request for \$25k to support the re-establishment of the film office, implement the Reel Scout platform, and enhance marketing and programming.

Administrator Bryant clarified that Visit Shreveport-Bossier presented earlier in the year during the regular economic development process, but an application was not sent out to them during the normal cycle—an oversight on the Parish's side. She also mentioned that Economic development policy does allow for this type of request to be considered.

Mr. Atkins expressed concern about departing from the standard application process and setting precedents if off-cycle requests are funded.

It was **moved by Mr. Atkins**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *to recommend to the full body an appropriation of \$25k for the Shreveport Film Office contingent upon a net positive economic impact study to be reviewed by the Finance Department and Administration.*

Mrs. Brown advised that they do have a positive economic impact study and produced a Simpleview report showing that film productions generated approximately \$2,359,768 in direct business impact and roughly 2,000 room nights in the current year. The film department budget is approximately \$200,000, indicating roughly a 10:1 return in direct spend versus department cost.

Mrs. Brown also clarified that the funding request is for programming and operations (software, marketing, trade missions, etc.). Mr. Marshall's salary is paid out of the Visitors Bureau budget, not from the funds being requested from the Parish.

Mr. G. Young expressed coordination with the Commission's Family & Entertainment Advisory Board to avoid duplication and maximize synergy. There was interest in receiving periodic updates so the Commission can track ongoing impact and activities.

At this time, Mr. Atkins withdrew his motion.

It was **moved by Mr. Atkins**, seconded by Mr. Burrell, *to recommend to the full body an appropriation of \$25k to the Visit Shreveport-Bossier Film Commission to be brought forward as an ordinance in January 2026 amending the 2026 budget. Motion carried unanimously with Commissioners Cothran and Lazarus being absent.*

Mrs. Brown said that Visit Shreveport-Bossier will begin providing quarterly written reports to the Parish Administrator on film and entertainment activities, including metrics (room nights, direct spend, productions, workforce initiatives), with the Administrator sharing information with the Commission as appropriate.

Mrs. Brown also mentioned that they are requesting funding for an MLK Celebration Choir Competition as part of a broader MLK tourism and quality-of-life initiative during the January peak visitation period. She presented a second initiative focused on enhancing visitation in November, December, and January—identified as peak tourism months for the region. Mrs. Brown identified MLK weekend as a key opportunity in January to package and promote multiple events under a unified MLK Celebration brand. The event will take place January 16-17, 2026. The preliminary round will be at First Methodist Church with the finale and celebration at the Strand Theatre. The target choirs are within a 200–300 mile radius, including groups from Batesville (AR), Holly Springs (MS), Grambling (LA), Mansfield (TX), and others currently committing. They will feature cash prizes and other incentives, with the goal of bringing choirs, families, and supporters into the community. This event complements existing MLK events and the start of Mardi Gras season, as well as support arts and educational experiences for participating students.

Mr. J. Young wanted to know if there is an economic impact study for this specific proposal. Mrs. Brown stated there is not yet an impact study; data would need to be developed.

There were questions regarding eligibility and quality standards for choirs. Mrs. Brown explained there is a \$50 application fee and requirements regarding choir size and composition; the focus is on church, college, and high school choirs, and the intent is not to arbitrarily exclude groups but to ensure a strong, appropriate musical standard.

Mr. Atkins mentioned that this request is outside of the traditional economic development funding cycle. He would like to maintain a clean budget process with minimal same-day amendments at the time of budget adoption.

Mr. G. Young said that the MLK “Dream Day” weekend has already shown signs of being a significant economic driver, bringing visitors into often under-visited areas and aligning with the Commission’s quality-of-life and family entertainment goals. The event provides educational, cultural, and arts exposure for local youth. Commissioners expressed strong conceptual support for the event and a desire to ensure it continues to grow.

Administration clarified that the Commission could: amend the 2026 budget at the December special meeting to include the \$15,000; or introduce a standalone 2026 budget amendment ordinance in January, even though the event occurs mid-January; funds could still be reimbursed later in the year.

It was **moved by Mr. Atkins**, seconded by Mr. Burrell, *to recommend to the full body an appropriation of \$15k to Visit Shreveport-Bossier Choir Competition to be brought forward as an ordinance in January 2026 amending the 2026 budget*

Substitute motion by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *to recommend that the full Commission adopt an amendment to the 2026 budget during the December special meeting to adopt the 2026 budget, specifically to fund this \$15,000 MLK choir competition request.*

Mr. Thomas said that the intent is to get the funding mechanism in place as early as possible while still respecting the overall budget process.

At this time, Mr. Thomas’ substitute motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Burrell, Gage-Watts, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (5). NAYS: Commissioner Atkins (1). ABSENT: Commissioners Cothran and Lazarus (2). ABSTAIN: None (0).

Administration will prepare budget language for a 2026 budget amendment to provide \$15,000 in support of the MLK Celebration Choir Competition for consideration at the December special meeting to adopt the 2026 budget. If the amendment does not pass in December, a standalone ordinance may be brought in January 2026 as a backup path.

Visit Shreveport-Bossier will continue planning and executing the January 16–17 choir competition, understanding that documentation must be preserved for retroactive reimbursement if needed. Develop economic impact data (room nights, visitor counts, direct spend) for the MLK weekend initiative to support future funding requests and reporting.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:48 p.m.



Michelle Nations
Assistant Commission Clerk