

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
OF THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION
HELD ON THE 3rd DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2025

The Caddo Parish Commission met in a Work Session, on the above date, at 3:30 p.m., in the Government Chambers, with Mrs. Gage-Watts, President, presiding, and the following members in attendance constituting a quorum: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Kracman, Lazarus, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (11). ABSENT: Commissioner Blake (1).

The invocation and Pledge of Allegiance were given during previous committee meetings. There were no Agenda Additions nor Citizens Comments, so the Commission moved to Visitors.

VISITORS

- *Food Bank of NWLA*

Representatives Tina Jones and Susan Garcia from the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana presented a request for \$100,000 in emergency funding to assist Caddo Parish residents facing food insecurity. They explained that reduced SNAP benefits and the halt in federal paychecks had created a sharp rise in food insecurity, affecting families, seniors, people with disabilities, and local government employees who have not received pay.

The Food Bank outlined that the requested funds would be used to purchase and distribute prepackaged food boxes (\$18 each) through their established parish-wide partner network. With their existing infrastructure, they could begin distribution within two weeks of receiving funds. Each truckload carries approximately 1,600 boxes (around \$29,000 per load), and \$100,000 would allow the purchase of about 8,000 boxes for immediate distribution.

Mr. J. Young asked about the state's supplemental SNAP funding and how the Food Bank's plan would supplement that assistance. Ms. Garcia explained the state funding is limited to certain groups, leaving others unserved.

Mr. Cothran inquired about the impact of public donations. Ms. Garcia encouraged the public to contribute via their website, noting \$100 could fund several food boxes.

President Gage-Watts clarified that the funding request was intended for Caddo Parish residents, specifically those qualifying under SNAP or income guidelines, but noted future discussion could expand eligibility to affected government employees if necessary.

Mr. G. Young asked for clarification on the Food Bank's operations and eligibility criteria. Ms. Garcia and Ms. Jones described their partnerships with agencies, churches, and community organizations, their backpack program for children, senior box program, and after-school meal initiatives. They explained that recipients must meet USDA income guidelines similar to SNAP, though the emergency boxes could be tailored to local eligibility criteria as directed by the Commission.

Mr. Atkins discussed the ordering process and timing, emphasizing caution about potential oversupply if the government shutdown ended soon. Ms. Jones and Ms. Garcia noted that all food is nonperishable and could be stored for later use.

Mr. Epperson confirmed that excess food would not go to waste, reinforcing that additional supplies would remain viable for continued parish distribution.

- *Shreveport Police Department
Corporal Daugherty*

Mr. Everson stated Corporal Daugherty was not in attendance.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

- Caddo Industrial Development Board
William Bradford, Chair

Mr. Bradford provided an operational update. The IDB—created under state law and Commission resolution—serves as an economic development arm for Caddo Parish with authority to acquire/lease/sell property and structure incentives, often partnering with LED, NLEP, and BRF. The volunteer board comprises parish residents appointed by the Commission.

He then talked about recent project performance and noted that Amazon promised 1,000 jobs, but have now employed over 3,000 jobs (exceeding commitment); SLB promised 596 jobs, but now have 781 employees (exceeding commitment).

Mr. Bradford then discussed the Small Business Economic Development Grant Program. It is a newly created program to support local growth; funded from IDB administrative fee revenues (no parish appropriation). The IDB provides up to 25% "gap" funding for qualified, ready-to-grow businesses

(not full project funding). One grant awarded; three applications received (two did not meet minimums); one additional application under committee review. There is approximately \$200k allocated to the program (IDB total fund balance ~\$4M, cyclical based on deals/fees).

Mr. Bradford also mentioned cadence and process improvements. Regular, scheduled meetings were reinstated; one-month notice is now required for incentive requests to allow deliberation and avoid special-meeting pressure.

There is a prospective project regarding veterinarian pharmaceuticals. The company is considering a Caddo site; this would double current business footprint and make Caddo its largest location. The current incentive that is under consideration is 10-year PILOT (aligned with ITEP levels; company pays ~20% ad valorem during term) plus \$1.2M cash toward specialized vial-filling equipment. Equipment would be collateralized with the building to de-risk public funds. Approximately \$6.97M of capital investment is required by the firm. Preliminary terms have been approved; final vote anticipated in December. IDB meetings are public and publicly noticed; attendance is strong.

Mr. Atkins sought scale/scope of small-business grants and program budget; Mr. Bradford confirmed 25% gap model and prudent budget management to sustain the program.

Mr. Burrell asked about grant throughput; Mr. Bradford reported one award to date, additional pipeline application under review.

Mr. Epperson queried pharmaceutical project specifics, PILOT, timing, meeting openness, board attendance; IDB confirmed public process and strong attendance with the board members. He also mentioned that the IDB did contribute \$15k to the Christmas in Roseland event.

Mr. G. Young asked about per-grantee caps (none set beyond the 25% framework; board exercises discretion). He encouraged alignment with the Commission's Economic Development Committee to avoid duplication and emphasized shifting community culture toward for-profit job creation (personal empowerment via business formation) rather than growing dependence on nonprofits. Mr. Brandford welcomed collaboration and input.

- Juvenile Detention Center census

Administrator Bryant said that there are 12 children in the Detention Center and three 17 year olds. There are 422 children on probation and thirteen juveniles are at CCC.

- Food Distribution

Administrator Bryant announced that the Food Distribution is scheduled for November 22, 2025. Locations will be sent out once details are finalized.

- Budget Retreat

Administrator Bryant also announced that the Budget Retreat will be held on November 12, 2025.

There being no Commission Remarks, President's Report, nor Old Business, so the Commission moved onto New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

It was **moved by Mr. J. Young**, seconded by Mr. Jones, *that Ordinance No. 6596 of 2025, an ordinance providing for the issuance and sale of not exceeding ten million dollars (\$10,000,000) of limited tax revenue bonds of Caddo Parish, Louisiana; and providing for other matters in connection therewith* be moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction.

Mr. J. Young stated the measure represents the next step toward financing the parish's previously approved pickleball facility project, emphasizing it is an economic development initiative designed to generate revenue. He clarified that the bonds are open to public purchase through financial firms, and repayment is guaranteed first by project revenue.

Mr. Cothran requested clarity for the public, noting that this vote continues an already approved project. Administrator Bryant confirmed that this step formally initiates the bond issuance process necessary to fund construction and that design work with the YMCA is ongoing. The Commission's bond attorney was present for any further questions.

Mr. Atkins reiterated that the ordinance authorizes "not to exceed \$10 million," emphasizing efforts to control costs through value engineering. He also clarified that repayment would first draw from non-tax sources—including facility revenues—before any potential use of general fund revenues. The Administrator confirmed the general fund serves as a pledged source only to ensure bond security and that no property tax increase is tied to the measure.

At this time, Mr. J. Young's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Lazarus, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (10). NAYS: Commissioner Kracman (10). ABSENT: Commissioner Blake (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. J. Young**, seconded by Mr. Jones, *that Ordinance No. 6597 of 2025, an ordinance amending the 2025 Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Riverboat and Oil & Gas Funds* be moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction.

Mr. Jones asked to be listed as a co-sponsor, emphasizing the immediate, basic need (food boxes) and urging community-minded support.

Mr. Epperson noted broad cost-of-living increases (e.g., food staples) compounding need; requested that if the federal situation resolves, funds be used for an additional December parish distribution.

Mr. Cothran

Mr. Burrell said, "these funds will not be spent on crack." He stressed the matter is nonpartisan and aimed at community welfare.

Mr. Thomas highlighted food desert conditions and the importance of quality, nutritious food versus convenience-only options.

Substitute motion by Mrs. Gage-Watts, seconded by Mr. Thomas, *that the appropriation be increased to up to \$200,000 for the NWLA Food Bank and Ordinance No. 6597, as amended*, be moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction.

Mrs. Gage-Watts offered this substitute motion to increase the allocation to "up to \$200,000" given parish-wide need and the link between hunger and public safety; clarified distributions must serve Caddo Parish residents.

Substitute motion by Mr. Atkins, seconded by Mr. Kracman, *that the \$200,000 funding be granted in \$100,000 tranches, with the second allocation of \$100,000 to be re-assessed by Administration within a month*.

At this time, Mr. Atkins' motion failed, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Kracman, and Lazarus (3). NAYS: Commissioners Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (8). ABSENT: Commissioner Blake (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

At this time, Mrs. Gage-Watts' motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Burrell, Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Lazarus, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (9). NAYS: Commissioners Atkins and Kracman (2). ABSENT: Commissioner Blake (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mr. Jones, *that Ordinance No. 6598 of 2025, an ordinance amending Ordinance No. 6554 of 2025, pertaining to Schedule of Licenses & Fees, and otherwise providing with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction. Motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Blake being absent.

It was **moved by Mr. J. Young**, seconded by Mr. Jones, *that Ordinance No. 6599 of 2025, an ordinance amending Article II of the Chapter 36 of the Code of Ordinances relative to Alcohol and Drunkenness in Parish Parks, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction.

Mr. J. Young explained that this enables alcohol service at the Walter B. Jacobs Event Center during permitted events while continuing to prohibit drunkenness in parish parks and prohibiting alcohol at other parish parks.

At this time, Mr. J. Young's motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Blake being absent.

It was **moved by Mr. J. Young**, seconded by Mr. Kracman, *that Ordinance No. 6600 of 2025, an ordinance amending and re-enacting Chapter 52 of the Code of Ordinances relative to Utilities, to include solar farm regulations, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction. Motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Blake being absent.

It was **moved by Thomas**, seconded by Mr. Jones, *that Ordinance No. 6601 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* be moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction.

Substitute motion by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *that the following items be englobed and advanced to Thursday's agenda for introduction and consideration:*

- *Ordinance No. 6601 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*
- *Resolution No. 43 of 2025, a resolution to authorize the Caddo Parish Administrator to execute the subsurface use agreement with Apex Natural Gas, LLC, and otherwise providing with respect thereto*
- *Special Resolution posthumously honoring five Civil Rights Leaders who are to be featured during the North Louisiana Civil Rights Museum's Legends Banquet*
- *Special Resolution honoring Mr. Shamarion McCoy of the BTW Band for being selected to All State Symphonic Band*
- *Special Resolution of Remembrance for Elvira Helaire Davis*

At this time, Mr. Thomas' motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Blake being absent.

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mr. Cothran, *that the following items be englobed and advanced to Thursday's agenda for consideration:*

- *Reappointment of William Bradford to the Industrial Development Board*
- *Reappointment of Lauren Marchive to the Parish Planning & Zoning Board*
- *Appointment of Brad Smith to the Fire District No. 1 Board*
- *Appointment of Anthony Burks to the Caddo Ward II Industrial Board*
- *Appointment of Tony Leach to Caddo Parish Sewerage District No. 7*
- *Reappointment of JoAnn Witkowski to Caddo Parish Sewerage District No. 7*
- *Appointment of Natalie Roberson to Caddo Parish Sewerage District No. 2*

At this time, Mr. Thomas' motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Blake being absent.

COMMUNIQES & COMMITTEE REPORTS

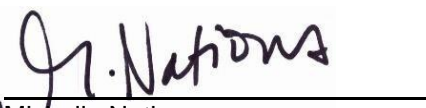
- Mr. Atkins affirmed support for funding the NWLA Food Bank, with preference for staged tranches.
- Mr. Cothran announced that the Long Range Planning Committee will meet on November 6 at 2:00 p.m. to discuss Job Corps
- Mr. Epperson announced that Operation Green Light starts November 3rd through November 11th and encouraged all to join in.
- Mr. Thomas announce that the City Council will hold an emergency meeting tomorrow at 10:00 a.m. to discuss the recent violence downtown.
- Mr. J. Young shared his Citizens Police Academy experience; next academy in spring; encouraged colleagues to enroll.

There were no Citizens Comments (late arrivals).

CONSENT AGENDA

- *Ordinance No. 6564 of 2025, an ordinance adopting the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Shreve Memorial Library for the year 2026*
- *Ordinance No. 6566 of 2025, an ordinance to close and abandon two portions of road of right-of-way in the Forbing Factory Subdivision, in Section 8, Township 16 North, Range 13 West, in the Parish Caddo, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

At this time, there was no further discussion to come before the Commission, so the Commission adjourned at 5:02 p.m.


Michelle Nations
Assistant Commission Clerk