

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S  
LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE  
HELD ON THE 6<sup>th</sup> DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2025

The Caddo Parish Long Range Planning Committee met in legal sessions on the above date at 2:00 p.m., in the Government Plaza Chambers, with the following members present constituting a quorum: Commissioners Cothran, Epperson, Gage-Watts, and Kracman (4). ABSENT: Commissioners Lazarus and Thomas (2). Commissioners J. Young and Burrell were also present.

The invocation and Pledge of Allegiance were given during the previous committee meeting. There were no Agenda Additions nor Citizens Comments, so the Committee moved onto New Business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- *Follow up with Job Corps Discussion*

Mr. Cothran thanked Mr. Essom and Mr. Ellis from the Shreveport Job Corps for coming and stated that the purpose of the meeting is to continue discussion from a previous regular session regarding potential partnership between the Commission and the Job Corps.

Mr. Essom asked that the discussion be postponed until the Job Corps has reached it enrollment goal. He said the center currently has 119 students, with a capacity of 285, and they are focusing their efforts on reaching capacity. Mr. Cothran said that they should at least develop an understanding of what a partnership between the Commission and the Job Corps may look like in the future. Mr. Essom said that they should develop a system where parties in the community could apply to the Commission to have projects completed by students at the Job Corps. Mr. Cothran asked what kind of projects the Job Corps would be able to complete. Mr. Essom said that they have trades including building and construction technology, welding, painting, and carpentry, and that they would be able to take on projects in those fields. He also mentioned they have soft trades in culinary arts and office administration, but this discussion was specifically regarding their construction trades.

Mrs. Gage-Watts asked how much time the Job Corps need before coming back for discussions. Mr. Essom answered January or February of 2026. He said they have their winter break coming up, so students will not be at the center, and they are working on enrollment during this time. He mentioned that many of their current students are close to completing the program, so they will have to rebuild their enrollment. Mrs. Gage-Watts thanked Mr. Essom for the update. Mr. Essom said that he would like to have enough students to avoid a situation where the Commission has vetted projects and sourced materials for the Job Corps but the Job corps does not have the students to complete said projects. Mrs. Gage-Watts agreed.

Mr. Burrell asked how many months it takes to get a student up to par to be able to complete these projects. Mr. Essom said that the students would be with an instructor when working on projects. Mr. Burrell said that even with the students being supervised, there may be issues with unskilled students working on projects. Mr. Ellis mentioned that they would be sending out students that were at least 55-65% through the program, so they would have skills to complete projects. He said they would not be sending new students out.

Mr. Burrell mentioned the Job Corps wanting the Commission to help in creating a list of projects. He said the Job Corps seems to take on projects based on demand. Mr. Essom said that requests for projects are sporadic and not consistent. He said the students do a lot of projects in the Job Corps Center, but they want the students to get experience of doing projects away from the Center. Mr. Burrell said that he understands that the Job Corps would like the Commission to assist in the process of securing projects. Mr. Essom said that they would like the Commission to assist in securing projects as well as supplying materials for said projects. Mr. Burrell asked if they are asking for assistance in just the

construction trades or also their culinary program. Mr. Essom said that the culinary students already have opportunities such as the State Fair and other work-based learning in restaurants.

Mr. Burrell mentioned that initially one of the Job Corps instructors said that they needed between \$65,000 and \$75,000 in funding. Mr. Essom mentioned that was a separate, prior issue for proposed training projects at the Job Corps Center and is not related to the current discussion.

Mr. J. Young asked Mr. Essom if funding from the Parish would help with their recruitment goals. Mr. Essom said no. He said the Job Corps is doing a lot of work in the media in regards to enrollment.

Mr. J. Young mentioned the Parish's wheelchair ramp program as a potential project for carpentry students. He also mentioned Paint Your Heart Out Shreveport as a potential avenue for carpentry and painting students. Mr. Essom said the ultimate goal for the Job Corps is to get the students jobs.

Administrator Bryant added that as their enrollment goes up, the Parish could definitely have projects to help. She asked for information on the Job Corps recruitment so that the Parish could put it on their social media to help.

Mr. Burrell asked if there are any issues on a federal level that could impact the Job Corps moving forward. Mr. Essom said that as of now, there are no federal issues impacting them. He said they are open and enrolling and that the government shutdown does not have any effect on them at the moment.

Mr. Cothran thanked Mr. Essom and said he looks forward to hearing from them in January or February of 2026.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:23 p.m.



Clayton McGee  
Administrative Specialist