

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
HELD ON THE 25<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2026

The Caddo Parish Economic Development Committee met in legal session on the above date at 12:30, p.m., in the Government Plaza Chambers, with the following members present constituting a quorum: Commissioners Blake, Burrell, Gage-Watts, G. Young, J. Young (5). ABSENT: None (0).

The invocation and Pledge of Allegiance were given during the previous committee meeting.

**AGENDA ADDITIONS**

It was **moved by Mr. G. Young**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *to add to the agenda a discussion regarding administration partnering with the Caddo Parish School Board for the purpose of furthering the Commission's film and entertainment education goals.*

There was no one to speak in favor or against the agenda addition. At this time, Mr. G. Young's motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Burrell absent.

There were no Public Comments, so the Committee moved on to New Business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- *Discussion of Annual Goals: Caddo Commission Bylaws define Economic Development Committee as: "To this committee shall be referred all legislation relating to the following subjects: appropriation of funds from the parish's video poker proceeds; Caddo Parish industrial inducement; economic development districts and special industrial taxing districts, industrial parks and enhancement avenues for new and existing businesses within the Parish of Caddo. This committee also features a sub-committee on entertainment."*

Commission Clerk Jeff Everson read the Bylaws definition for the Committee.

- *Update and Discussion on the Film and Entertainment recommendations to include a presentation from Talent Show Consultants*

Parks & Recreation Director Patrick Wesley and Tarsha Tieuel came before the Committee. Mr. Wesley said that they are proposing a parish-wide talent search competition for youth ages 6 to 19. He said they have partnered with Cumulus Media and KTBS. Mrs. Tieuel gave a presentation outlining the Caddo's Rising Star competition. The competition encompasses vocal, musical, dance and movement, theatrical, comedy, magic, acting, poetry, and spoken word performances. The dates for live auditions are March 14<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> and April 11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. Then will be a qualifying round on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, with a contingency date of May 9<sup>th</sup>. The live auditions and qualifying round will potentially take place in various Caddo Parish schools. There will be a Rising Star mascot designed by LVH Designs. The judges will come from local colleges. The qualifying round and finale will include some local celebrities. Each contestant is allowed to bring one person, including the parent or guardian of every minor. The finale will be on June 7<sup>th</sup> at the convention center. There will be a cash prize, a trophy, recording studio time, a television interview, a radio interview, and local performances for the winner. Mrs. Tieuel showcased the different versions of the program's logo. She also showed the registration application and non-disclosure agreement that contestants must sign. Contestants will wear a card with their name, age, and school. There is also a star pass which auditioners can win, which will move them straight to the qualifying round.

Commissioner John Paul Young thanked Mrs. Tieuel for her presentation and said that he is excited for the competition. He clarified that the 11 stars on the program's logo stand for the 11 municipalities of Caddo Parish.

Administrator Erica Bryant said that there will be a press conference to announce all of the details of the program to the public.

Commissioner Gregory Young expressed his appreciation for the effort of those organizing the program.

Mrs. Bryant explained that appropriations have already been made for this program and that they are able to move forward. She thanked the Commission for their support of this endeavor.

Mrs. Gage-Watts noted the professionalism and passion for this endeavor from Mr. G. Young. She said that this was an idea they brought back from an economic development conference in Atlanta, Georgia. She invited Eddie Norris from KTBS 3 to the podium. Mr. Norris said that he appreciates the opportunity to participate in this effort. He said he knows there is a tremendous amount of talent in Caddo Parish and invited the Commission to reach out to him and KTBS moving forward to make the program as good as possible.

- *Visit from the Louisiana Rougaroux Football Team*

Mr. Lyndon B. Johnson came before the Committee to give a presentation about the Louisiana Rougaroux Arena Football Team. He said that their season starts February 28<sup>th</sup> at Brookshire Grocery Arena. He explained that the team played at Hirsch Coliseum last year, but the ice underneath the field for hockey was not good for playing football. He said that their players and coaches are going to be visiting school and setting up camps in Caddo Parish. He highlighted the various backgrounds of players on the team and the difference between arena football and traditional American football. He highlighted how close spectators are to the action of the game. He explained that the team is requesting \$32,500 from the Commission. He said that will assist the team in developing the programs regarding visiting schools and hosting camps. He explained how the players play in Bossier but stay in Shreveport and contribute to the Caddo Parish economy.

Mrs. Gage-Watts asked for clarification on the pronunciation of the team's name, which Mr. Johnson provided.

Mr. J. Young said this seems like a good opportunity for sports tourism in the area. He explained that he had heard of the team in a past meeting, but had not encountered it elsewhere to his recollection. He asked where they are advertising. Mr. Johnson answered that they are advertising on social media and some billboards. He said as more money comes in, they will have television ads. Mr. J. Young said he thinks a lot of people would be interested if they were to see advertisements.

Mr. Johnson highlighted how many of the members of the organization are new this year and have a vision for success.

Mrs. Gage-Watts said that the river between Caddo and Bossier Parishes should unite, not divide, the people of the region. She said that just because the games occur on the other side of the river, that does not mean it does not have an impact on Caddo.

Commissioner Grace Anne Blake said that she is very excited about arena football, which she has known about for years. She said that she thinks the draw is how fast and high impact the sport is. She also said she thinks it is a good opportunity for tourism.

Mr. Johnson added that the team's practice facilities are in Caddo Parish.

Mr. G. Young mentioned the fiduciary responsibility of the Commission. He asked administration if the team had gone through the regular screening process for appropriations. Mrs. Bryant answered that they have not, however there is a process for economic development opportunities throughout the year that they can look at. Mr. Johnson clarified that they do have an application for appropriations. Mr. G. Young mentioned that the region has not done well in the past supporting local sports teams. He said they need to somehow get the people interested in sports. Mr. Johnson mentioned that there are many football fans in the area, so he thinks this endeavor will be different. He explained that the team being present in the community will make a difference. Mr. G. Young said he is hopeful, but that sports teams are not consistently supported, dating back to the Shreveport Captains in the 1980s. He said they must do something different or else they will get the same outcomes. He highlighted the poor attendance of the Independence Bowl. He said that he welcomes the efforts of the Rougaroux.

Mr. Johnson highlighted the various themes there will be at the games, aiming to have a similar atmosphere to college and professional football games. He mentioned the climate-controlled nature of the games. He also said they will be inviting high school and middle school students to participate in the pregame and halftime shows to get the community involved.

Mr. Thomas said that he welcomes this idea and thinks it will be great for tourism.

Commissioner Roy Burrell asked for clarification if this was the same Rougaroux team that was already existing. Mr. Johnson answered that there is a new owner, new general manager, and many new players. Mr. Burrell asked if they will be playing any more games in the Hirsch Coliseum. Mr. Johnson reiterated the issues with the Hirsch Coliseum and answered that they will only host games at the Brookshire Grocery Arena. Mr. Burrell asked how Bossier Parish is contributing since the games will be hosted there. Mr. Johnson answered that they are trying to secure funding from Bossier as well as Caddo. He mentioned that their practice facilities are in Caddo Parish. Mr. Burrell asked to what extent Bossier is supporting them. Mr. Johnson answered that there is different personnel focused on securing funds from Bossier while he is focused in Caddo. Mr. Burrell said he hoped that they would be able to sustain something in Caddo Parish. He said he has been disappointed that the community has not supported similar activities. Mr. Johnson added that local recognition of the Rougaroux's players may motivate people to come out and support the team. Mr. Burrell expressed concern that the two parishes may not support each other in many instances. Mr. Johnson explained that the team is known as the "Louisiana" Rougaroux as a measure of including all residents. He said they are the only team in their league from the state. Mr. Burrell asked how they are including local schools. Mr. Johnson explained they are going to be mentoring students and having workshops.

Mrs. Gage-Watts mentioned that their project aligns with a lot of the Commission's goals, such as affordable, family-friendly entertainment and military appreciation. Mr. Johnson added that there is a group ticket package for children for 50 tickets for \$1,000.

Mr. G. Young asked if they had completed an economic impact study as a requirement for funding. Mrs. Bryant said that they will provide that information before the full grant is executed.

It was **moved by Mr. J. Young**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *to recommend to the full body to move forward with support of the request of the Louisiana Rougaroux football team in the amount of \$32,500.*

Mr. J. Young said that it would be best to have the economic impact study before the vote of the full body. Mr. Johnson said they will have it in the next few days. Mr. J. Young said that they need to do everything they can to improve activities and desirability on both sides of the river. He said that they will benefit from more things going on at the arena. He mentioned that his business made a lot of money in one night from one event at the arena when Paul McCartney played there. He said the amount of the request is reasonable and that he hopes they do a good job advertising and get good attendance.

Mrs. Gage-Watts spoke to Shreveport and Bossier being twin cities. She said she remembers the Pirates team from the past which brought economic impact to the area. She also said she believes this can bring other opportunities back to the area and hopes her colleagues will support it.

Mrs. Blake said that they just came from an economic development announcement which was a win for the region. She said that growth is here and they should do all they can to support. She said that they must be willing to promote and show up for this initiative. She said she understands the impact arena football can make coming into schools and working with the youth. She said she spent the weekend at multiple events, spending her money on both sides of the river. She said Bossier sees the importance of coming together for things like this.

Mr. Burrell said that when he was in state government, he represented both Shreveport and Bossier. He said that Caddo seemed to be more amenable to support Bossier than Bossier was to Caddo. He said he hopes that is changing, but he has yet to see it as much as he would like. He asked Mr. Johnson what the benefit would be for Caddo to expend funds for a team playing in Bossier. Mr. Johnson highlighted the Rougaroux and visiting teams will be staying in Caddo Parish for the games hosted at the Brookshire Grocery Arena.

At this time, the motion carried unanimously.

- *Discussion regarding administration partnering with the Caddo Parish School Board for the purpose of furthering the Commission's film and entertainment education goals*

**It was moved by Mr. G. Young**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *to authorize the Caddo Parish administrator to explore opportunities with the Caddo Parish School Board for the purpose of film and entertainment education.*

Mr. G. Young said that several years ago, it was brought to his attention that there was a need for high-tech companies to come to the area. He said at the time he expressed issues with that idea because it's not a complete thought. He explained that it would be challenging to get those companies to come to the area when there is no skills base for the companies to use as employees. He highlighted that Amazon is bringing education about their industry to the area, and with that other companies will be interested in coming as there will be a basis for employment opportunities. He wants to encourage film producers to come to our area in the same way. Mrs. Gage-Watts said that this is a great discussion to have. She reiterated that we should have the workforce available for companies who want to come to the area and help students have avenues to careers before they get out of high school.

At this time, the motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 1:36, p.m.



Clayton McGee  
Administrative Specialist