

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
OF THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION
HELD ON THE 2nd DAY OF MARCH, 2026

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

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

AGENDA ADDITIONS

It was **moved by Mrs. Gage-Watts**, seconded by Mr. Jones, *that the agenda be expanded and Special Resolution commemorating the 100th Birthday of Mr. Green Whitaker be added under New Business.*

Mister President opened the floor for anyone to speak for or against the agenda addition. There being no one to speak, President G. Young closed the public hearing.

At this time, Mrs. Gage-Watts' motion to expand the agenda carried unanimously with Commissioner Epperson being absent (1).

The Clerk of the Commission advised that this Special Resolution would be taken up during the March 19 Regular Session.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Jon Glover came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

Good evening, Commissioners and administration. Jon Glover, 9100 Walker Road, Apartment 217, Shreveport, Louisiana, zip code 71118. I'm a stickler for reading over the agendas and looking at the issues that may or may not impact us as citizens of Caddo Parish. I was looking at one specific piece of agenda authored by one of the Commissioners, Resolution 17 of 2026. It deals with post-conviction relief for those convicted by non-unanimous jury verdicts. Well, before I could address that, I needed to understand specifically what it was that we were speaking to. So, I read the legislation that was authored by Louisiana Representative Charles Owens. And in the legislation, Representative Owens has shown in his narrative that there seems to be some issues in the courts. It's not the legislature, but it's the courts that seems to be either dismissing what has been passed, no longer non-unanimous verdicts, or they just are not paying attention. So, to be able to say that I will support such a thing or ask my representative to support or not support, I needed to be clear in that conversation. And based on what I have found and am sharing with you all, I'm going to ask my representative not to support it. Not because it's not a good issue, but because it has already been addressed. It needs whatever it is that we're trying to accomplish, even with Representative Charles Owens' legislation, he has distinctly said the problem comes from the court. And if the court is not adhering to what has been approved by the legislature, then they need to be called to the carpet, not you all trying to say we're going to make you or whatever that situation is or whatever the purpose is, because it's not something that you all need to be responsible for. Thank you.

There were no Visitors.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

- March 9th Press Announcement—Caddo's Rising Star

Administrator Bryant announced that there will be a press conference on March 9 regarding the talent show, Caddo's Rising Star.

- Summer Employment Plan

Administrator Bryant announced that the summer employment applications will open up in March and can be accessed via the parish website.

- Juvenile Detention Center census

Administrator Bryant said that there are 11 children in the Detention Center, three of which are OJJ. There are no 17 year olds. There are 387 children on probation. Eleven juveniles are at CCC.

- Water Disruption

Due to City of Shreveport water issues, the parish advised that community lighthouses are open to assist residents with water access (water available for collection in containers), and additional distribution information would be shared as it becomes available.

Commissioners asked follow-up questions regarding whether a boil advisory was in effect (noted as “voluntary” per Administration’s understanding), and whether bottled water would be available at lighthouse sites (efforts underway). Additional remarks clarified that water from the well sites is not legally potable due to testing frequency, though it is drawn from the same aquifer as other well water in the parish; commissioners advised it may be appropriate for non-drinking uses such as flushing.

- Kristin Delahoussaye—CAFA update

Administration introduced Kristen Delahoussaye with the Capitol Area Finance Authority (CAFA) to provide an update on the homeownership and down payment assistance programs operated through the Commission’s cooperative endeavor agreement.

Ms. Delahoussaye explained that CAFA is a public trust based in Baton Rouge with a multi-parish footprint, and that CAFA is able to offer programs in most Louisiana parishes through cooperative endeavor agreements, including Caddo Parish (entered in 2020). She reviewed CAFA’s down payment and closing cost assistance programs, noting they are available to eligible borrowers working with approved lenders and are not limited to first-time homebuyers under certain products.

Ms. Delahoussaye reported that CAFA has continued to share fees with Caddo Parish from program activity, totaling approximately \$152,526 to date. She noted that as market interest rates increased, participation in the traditional assistance programs slowed significantly, and CAFA transitioned to a bond program to provide below-market interest rates.

Ms. Delahoussaye advised that CAFA sought bond proceeds through the Bond Commission for a third time in January, receiving \$50 million in volume cap (noting a prior request for \$100 million). She stated the current bond program rate is approximately 5.88%, which she characterized as a significant benefit for eligible first-time homebuyers. She contrasted the bond program with the non-bond assistance program (which does not require first-time homebuyer status and uses qualifying income rather than household income), indicating the latter rate has been holding around 6.5% and may see increased activity as rates stabilize.

Ms. Delahoussaye further explained general program requirements, including income limits (noted as nearly \$100,000 in Caddo Parish for certain programs), a minimum 620 credit score, and other restrictions depending on the specific product. She stated CAFA anticipates continuing bond issuances so long as market conditions support maintaining below-market rates.

Mr. J. Young asked about the CAFA First Home program’s “targeted area” requirement. Ms. Delahoussaye explained that targeted areas are determined using federal definitions (HUD/tax-credit related) and are evaluated by address, not necessarily a broadly defined geographic boundary. She advised that borrowers and lenders can use CAFA’s website tools and program guidelines to confirm whether a specific address is within a targeted area and noted that some parishes have few or no targeted zones.

Mr. Atkins asked about the 4% assistance component and whether it is calculated on the mortgage value. Ms. Delahoussaye clarified it is a percentage of the final loan amount and explained the structure as a “silent/soft second” with no monthly payment. She outlined forgiveness terms, including a lockout period and then declining repayment requirements, with full forgiveness at the end of the applicable period.

Mr. Jones asked that this be presented during neighborhood association meetings.

Mr. G. Young talked about the HAPI program and asked whether individuals qualifying for the HAPI program might also qualify for CAFA programs and whether CAFA assistance could be layered with HAPI benefits. Ms. Delahoussaye advised CAFA eligibility is primarily determined by credit score, approved lender participation, and income limits (and first-time homebuyer status for the bond program). She explained CAFA can “stack” assistance with certain other programs (example provided: bank-affiliated funding sources), but compatibility depends on loan structure and servicing requirements. She indicated she was not fully familiar with the HAPI program’s financing model and suggested further discussion with HAPI program representatives to determine whether collaboration or coordinated marketing is feasible.

Ms. Delahoussaye explained CAFA aims to remain below prevailing market rates, while acknowledging that if market rates fall below CAFA’s bond rate, bond placement could become more challenging.

The President requested clarification on the difference between household income and qualifying income. Ms. Delahoussaye explained that household income includes income from all adults living in the home, while qualifying income considers only the income of the borrower(s) on the loan. She noted the bond program is more restrictive due to household-income calculations and first-time homebuyer requirements.

The President expressed encouragement regarding outreach and emphasized that lack of information is often a barrier for potential homebuyers. He thanked Ms. Delahoussaye for coming to today’s meeting and presenting this information.

COMMISSION REMARKS

- Mr. Thomas shared community updates, including Light It Up Blue Autism Fun Run/Walk and 318 Restaurant Week.

He also introduced Mr. Aquarian Williams who is the first graduate of an EMPower Workforce program. Mr. Williams described the program, certificates earned, hands-on training components, resume support, and job placement outcomes. Commissioners asked questions about certificate types, how credentials are verified/retained, and how young adults can learn about and enroll in the program.

There was no President's Report, nor Old Business.

NEW BUSINESS

It was **moved by Mr. J. Young**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *to englobo and advance the following items:*

- *Resolution No. 16 of 2026, a resolution approving the holding of an election in North Caddo Hospital Service District on Saturday, June 27, 2026, to authorize the continuation of a levy and collection of a 5.0 mill property tax therein*
- *Special Resolution of Remembrance Margaret Shehee*
- *Special Resolution commemorating Women's Month*
- *Special Resolution commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the Order of Eastern Star-Ruth Chapter 57*
- *Regular Session Minutes from February 19, 2026*
- *Advance Special Resolution commemorating the 100th Birthday of Mr. Green Whitaker to the March 19 Regular Session agenda*

At this time, Mr. J. Young's motion to englobo and advance carried unanimously with Commissioner Epperson being absent (1).

It was **moved by Mr. Jones**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *that Resolution No. 17 of 2026, a resolution of support for House Bill 219 of 2026 Louisiana Regular Session regarding post-conviction relief for those convicted by non-unanimous jury verdicts, and otherwise providing with respect thereto be advanced to today's Special Session agenda.*

Mr. Burrell explained the purpose as encouraging state action to review/allow relief for cases involving non-unanimous (described as unconstitutional) verdicts, emphasizing it does not automatically release individuals but provides a path for review. Historical context was provided regarding the origins of non-unanimous verdicts and Louisiana's status relative to other states.

Mr. Atkins stated opposition to directing other governing bodies and expressed a desire for deeper understanding before taking a position.

Mr. J. Young voiced support, citing the importance of unanimous verdicts, reasonable doubt standards, and the value of local resolutions as guidance to state legislators.

Mr. G. Young requested clarification from the resolution's author regarding the material benefit of post-conviction relief for individuals convicted by non-unanimous jury verdicts. Specifically, he asked what relief would look like in practical terms for a person currently incarcerated — whether it would result in release, retrial, sentence reduction, or another form of remedy — and what legal mechanism would govern such review. Mr. Burrell responded that the relief contemplated would not automatically result in release but would allow for a review process. He explained that relief could potentially include sentence reduction or other judicial reconsideration, depending on the circumstances of the case.

Mrs. Blake raised concerns regarding victims' rights and the potential re-traumatization of victims and families if cases are revisited, including logistical concerns such as locating witnesses and reintroducing evidence years later.

Mr. Kracman expressed that the matter would be debated at the state level regardless of the Commission's action and indicated opposition on that basis.

The discussion included strong acknowledgment that the Commission does not support violent offenders who have been justly convicted, but that the resolution seeks to address potential wrongful convictions.

Call for the Question by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts. Motion carried by acclamation.

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

COMMUNIQUES & COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Mr. Jones reiterated the historical origins of non-unanimous verdict laws and emphasized that wrongful convictions have occurred. It was stated that reviewing such cases does not guarantee release but provides an opportunity for correction where appropriate.
- Mr. Burrell cited specific examples of exonerations involving non-unanimous jury verdicts and characterized those individuals as victims of wrongful conviction.
- Mr. G. Young said that he does not advocate for individuals who are rightfully and justly convicted of violent crimes. The intent of the discussion centers on preventing continued victimization of individuals wrongfully convicted, and that justice must protect both crime victims and those potentially wrongfully incarcerated.
- Mr. Cothran reported on a recent Public Safety Committee meeting and indicated that materials would be shared with the full Commission. Emphasis was placed on collaboration with law enforcement and the community to improve parish-wide safety.
- Mr. J. Young provided updates regarding emergency water distribution sites, including: The Highland Center and Morning Star Baptist Church serving as emergency water distribution locations; water available is legally non-potable due to testing frequency but suitable for certain non-drinking uses; and ongoing water giveaways and distribution efforts during reduced water operations.

Commissioners acknowledged the foresight in establishing emergency preparedness sites with water access and emphasized the importance of infrastructure readiness during emergencies.

There were no Citizens Comments.

CONSENT AGENDA

- *Ordinance No. 6608 of 2026, an ordinance providing amendments to the Caddo Parish Fee Schedule, 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 4:56 p.m.



Michelle Nations
Assistant Commission Clerk