

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
OF THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION
HELD ON THE 20th DAY OF APRIL, 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, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jones, Kracman, Lazarus, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (12). ABSENT: None (0).

The Pledge of Allegiance was given during a previous committee meeting. Mr. Jones delivered a prayer asking for God's peace, guidance, and strength in the light of the recent tragedy. The prayer specifically lifted up the affected family, asking for healing, protection from negativity and distraction, and support during an unimaginably painful time. The prayer also called upon the community to respond with love, compassion, and constructiveness rather than criticism.

AGENDA ADDITIONS

It was **moved by Mrs. Gage-Watts**, seconded by Mr. Thomas, *to expand the agenda and add Special Resolution regarding the tragic events of April 29, 2026 under New Business.*

The President opened the floor for anyone to speak for or against the agenda additions. There was no one to speak, so the President closed the public hearing.

At this time, Mrs. Gage-Watts' motion carried unanimously with all twelve members being present.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Paige Hoffpauir came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

Hi, my name is Paige Hoffpauir, 1064 Gabriels Turn. This, I gave to you, and this is what it references. I will need more time, I'll say that up front, but it's not that long. I just want to give good measure to these words. Citizen's proclamation rededicating the City of Shreveport back to god, declaring over the Caddo Parish Commission, April 20th, 2026. Almighty god, sovereign over the nations and author of liberty, we bow before you on this 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. With hearts full of gratitude, we thank you for the blessings you have bestowed upon this land. With reverence we acknowledge your providence that has guided us through trials and triumphs, and with humility we confess the times that we have strayed from your ways. Two and a half centuries ago, our founding fathers, in the heart of revolution and the hope of a new order, declared that all men are created equal and endowed by their creator with unalienable rights. They looked to you, oh lord, as a source of true liberty, and in so doing, laid the cornerstone of a nation that would become a beacon of freedom to the world. You have poured out blessings upon this land: abundant natural resources, vast and varied landscapes, and a people endowed with ingenuity and resilience. The Constitution they framed, undergirded by moral conviction and spiritual awareness, unleashed the greatest experiment in self-government the world has ever known. From the fields of Gettysburg to the beaches of Normandy, from Salem's bridge to the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, you have been our refuge and strength. Yet, oh lord, we acknowledge that we have not always walked in your ways. We have often trusted in your wisdom, pursued idols of power and prosperity, and turned a blind eye to injustice. The sins of pride, division, and indifference have stained our national conscience. And so, at this historic time, we rededicate Shreveport, Louisiana, and the United States of America to you, the one true god, and ask that all leaders in our city do so as well. We do not do so in presumption, but in repentance. We plead the mercy purchased by the sacrifice of your son Jesus Christ, and ask that you would renew our hearts and restore our land. Let your spirit move across this nation, from the halls of Congress to the quiet corners of rural towns, from the peaks of the Rockies to the shores of the Atlantic and Pacific. May your truth be proclaimed, your justice upheld, and your grace embraced. Raise up a generation of Daniels, Esthers, Elijahs, men and women of courage, conviction, and compassion, who will stand firm in the face of compromise and speak truth and love. Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Awaken dry bones, revive weary hearts, and make us one again, a people after your own heart. We entrust this land to you, oh lord. May the City of Shreveport, the State of Louisiana, and the United States of America be blessed when we walk in your ways, and may your mercy cover us when we falter, in the name of the father and of the son and of the holy spirit. Whereas in our city and across America, the observance of a National Day of Prayer will be held on Thursday, May 7th, 2026, and on May 17th, 2027, our president, Donald J. Trump, has declared a day of national jubilee, praise and thanksgiving rededicating America to one nation under god. Whereas Shreveport has a rich spiritual heritage of Jewish and Christian believers who have stood unified in faith, believing that god's kingdom will come and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Now, therefore, we, as citizens of both Shreveport and heaven, declare Isaiah 2:2-4, that the mountain of the lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it, and many people shall go up to the mountain of the lord, to the house of the god of Jacob, and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his path. We declare this over the seven mountains of cultural influence in our city, which are the church body of Christ, family, government, education, business-economy, arts-entertainment, and our military/first responders, and declare Habakkuk 2:14, that Shreveport, Louisiana, the United States of America, and the entire earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the lord as the waters cover the sea. Now, since the National Day of Prayer is a public law, established in the United States Congress in 1952, approved by a joint resolution, signed by President Truman, and amended by Congress and President Reagan with public law

100-307 in 1988, affirming that it is essential for us, as a nation, to pray, and directs the president of the United States to set aside and proclaim the first Thursday of May annually as the National Day of Prayer. Thereby, we hereby declare it a right of our children in schools on May 7th, 2026, to pray to god for their protection, their peace, their families, and their teachers, to make the day full of rejoicing and gladness, instead of fear and disillusionment. It is high time we invite the god of the universe back into our schools and households, in Jesus's name so be it.

David Hackney came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

Good afternoon, my name's Dave Hackney, 9660 Railsback Ridge, Shreveport, Louisiana 71106. Two weeks ago, I was before this Commission speaking in support of Resolution 27, which opposed Senate Bill 170. Today, I'm here to talk about House Bill 713. That was a bill that Representative McCormick had before a committee last week, and I watched the video of it that afternoon, I didn't watch it live. And I was somewhat troubled by what I saw. There was a lady by the name of Dr. Markey Pierre speaking in opposition. One of the port commissioners, Steven Calloway, who is a Caddo Parish designated commissioner to the port, was also speaking in opposition, along with a lobbyist. Some of the comments Dr. Pierre made I questioned. One, she stated she was employed by Caddo Parish. I think she's a lobbyist, she's not an employee of Caddo Parish Commission. She said that we've submitted resolutions opposing House Bill 713. I might have missed it, but the last couple months, has this Commission made a resolution opposing House Bill 713? I don't think so, but I might be wrong, you guys tell me. She went on to state that— and this bill had to do with the port commissioner compensation. Dr. Pierre went on to say that the Caddo-appointed Caddo-Bossier Port commissioners routinely report to this Commission. Now I know that Mrs. Bryant is a port commissioner and Judge Calloway is. I'm good friends with Judge Calloway. I haven't seen, like, presentations to this Commission, or anything in minutes talking about various things at the port. I go to the port meetings. They last seven to eleven minutes. That includes the prayer, the pledge of allegiance, and the roll call. You don't get much out of a port meeting. And so, I think there needs to be some answers of who authorized this lobbyist to speak on behalf and act as if she was a Caddo Parish Commission employee. Just wasn't done right. Thank you.

Robert Bruchun came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

Robert Bruchun, 1533 Marshall Street. What defines a community is not the worst of us. What defines a community is how we come together, how we choose to be better, and how we prevent producing the worst outcomes in the first place. Eight children lost their lives yesterday. That will never become the norm in Shreveport, Louisiana. Since then, I've met with families, organizations, and community leaders, and we are not just talking, we are building a plan. And today, I want to speak on that plan. At the center of this plan is a partnership with Seedlinks, because through their structure, licensure, and reach, we're able to access schools, homes, and communities the right way and the responsible way. First, we must shift how we approach domestic violence at the beginning, not just the end. We are proposing that domestic violence intervention class becomes a part of the preliminary process, not just punishment. If those steps are ignored, then it should directly impact the consequences that follow, because right now, we are reacting when we should be preventing. Second, we want to work alongside the Shreveport Police Department and support it through the structure of Seedlinks. We want to build a community response network. When officers are responding to domestic situations, trained community teams can step in the support the victim, the offender, and the families effected, because the damage doesn't stop when the call ends. Third, we need education, just like programs such as D.A.R.E. address the drug epidemic, we want to reach every child in Caddo Parish, elementary, middle, and high school, through a structured, approved initiative that teaches what domestic violence really looks like, because it's not just physical. It's emotional, it's verbal, and it's psychological. Fourth, we are proposing visible resources across the city, at emergency response billboards, a local tip line, and easily accessible resource lists for families in crisis, all connected through a coordinated network supported by Seedlinks. We want to deploy trained teams into at-risk communities, not as random individuals, but as certified, prepared partners operating under a unified standard. And finally, we must create a housing support fund to safely remove victims from dangerous situations without making them feel like they are being punished for seeking help. This is not a one organization effort, but is a structured effort. With Seedlinks providing the foundation and partnerships with community groups, this Commission, and law enforcement like the Caddo Parish Sheriff's Office, we can build something that actually works, because this is not just the moment, this is a responsibility. We cannot change what happened yesterday, but we can take control of what happens next.

VISITORS

- Dr. Joseph Jones
North Louisiana Crime Lab

At this time, Dr. Joseph Jones, representing the North Louisiana Criminalistics Laboratory, was recognized. He appeared at the invitation of Mr. Burrell to provide an update on the laboratory's operations and emerging public safety concerns.

Dr. Jones began by offering condolences on behalf of the laboratory staff, noting that many employees live and work in the Shreveport community and are personally affected by such tragedies. He then presented information regarding novel psychoactive substances, describing them as synthetic drugs often disguised as legitimate pharmaceuticals such as Xanax or oxycodone. He explained that these substances are frequently far more potent—sometimes five to ten times stronger than fentanyl—and pose a significant risk to public health.

Dr. Jones reported that these substances have been detected throughout the region and are increasing in prevalence. He emphasized that approximately 95% of substances tested are not what users believe them to be, highlighting the danger posed by illicit drug distribution. He also noted that these substances are typically manufactured in the United States and trafficked into local communities.

Dr. Jones provided an update on the laboratory's financial condition, stating that efforts to address a \$1.5 million deficit had been largely successful, with approximately \$1.1 million raised and additional funding anticipated. He noted that forensic analysis is costly but essential to public safety and criminal justice operations.

Mr. Burrell engaged Dr. Jones in discussion regarding workforce development and internship opportunities, suggesting the potential for partnerships with local universities to build capacity in forensic science. Dr. Jones confirmed that internship programs are available and that recruitment efforts are ongoing.

Following the presentation, President G. Young thanked Dr. Jones and his team for their work and contributions.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

- Employee Pin Ceremony—May 1

Administrator Bryant also announced that the Employee Pin Ceremony would be held May 1 at the Walter B. Jacobs Nature Center.

- March 2026, Financial Statements

Administrator Bryant stated that the March 2026 financial statements are attached to the agenda, and a hard copy is placed at each Commissioners' station.

- Juvenile Detention Center census

Administrator Bryant said that there are 10 children in the Detention Center, 1 of which are OJJ. There are no 17 year olds. There are 389 children on probation. Seventeen juveniles are at CCC.

- Kent Rogers, NLCOG

Mr. Kent Rogers, Executive Director, provided an overview of project progress, including the identification of a preferred alternative and submission of the environmental impact study to federal authorities for review. He said that once the draft document is approved for release, it may be advertised for public hearing and public comment. It was explained that the draft Environmental Impact Statement would ideally be published during the second quarter of 2026, though the schedule remained dependent on federal review.

Mr. Rogers explained that once the draft is published, it must remain available to the public for a minimum of 30 days prior to the public hearing, followed by an additional 10-day comment period after the hearing, resulting in an approximate 45-day public comment window. Preliminary conversations had already begun with the Shreveport Convention Center regarding space availability for a future public hearing, with a tentative timeframe of late summer or early fall being considered.

He further advised that after receipt of public comments and completion of the hearing process, responses to those comments would be prepared and the final Environmental Impact Statement would be resubmitted to the Federal Highway Administration, along with a Record of Decision (ROD). Once the ROD is approved, the project may proceed into the next phases, including engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and construction.

It was noted that once the project reaches the Federal Highway Administration in Washington, D.C., the process becomes largely procedural, requiring review by multiple divisions, including Title VI, Civil Rights, and Environmental sections.

During discussion, Mr. Lazarus asked which of the four build-through alternatives had been identified as the preferred route. Mr. Rogers advised that the preferred alternative could not yet be publicly disclosed until formally authorized by federal officials.

Mr. Burrell then reflected on the lengthy history of the project, noting that he had first proposed \$4 million for the economic study in 2007, some eighteen years earlier. He asked about the anticipated timeline for federal approval or rejection. In response, Mr. Rogers stated that comments received thus far had been minor and largely technical in nature and that there was no expectation that the identified preferred alternative would be rejected, given the continued involvement of the Louisiana Division Office of the Federal Highway Administration throughout the process. Mr. Rogers stated that the project team hoped to move to public hearing by the end of the second quarter or early third quarter of 2026.

Mr. Burrell also asked about the total cost of the project to date and how costs had changed

since the original study. Mr. Rogers stated that approximately \$9 million had been allocated for development and environmental work and recalled that the original projected construction cost had been in the range of \$300 to \$400 million, whereas the cost is now estimated to be approximately \$1 billion, due in large part to substantial increases in construction costs following the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Burrell commented that, when the project first began, there was far less blight in the area than exists now, and he expressed appreciation that the Governor had recently stated that the project was a priority. In response, Mr. Rogers noted that the state had already incorporated substantial funding mechanisms into its planning, including bonding authority, BP oil spill funds, and automobile sales tax revenue, indicating that the state appeared prepared from a funding standpoint.

Mr. Thomas then thanked Mr. Rogers and noted that since public reporting about the possible routes had surfaced, he had received numerous calls, particularly because the proposed routes could significantly affect the Allendale area. He asked how much weight the public comment process would carry in the final recommendation submitted to the federal government. Mr. Rogers responded that public comment has played a significant role throughout the life of the project and, in fact, has contributed to the length of time the process has taken. He stated that a typical project of this nature might involve only four or five public meetings, whereas this project had already included approximately 38 or 39 public meetings, in addition to the final formal public hearing still to come. He stressed that the process was not a popularity contest or simple vote count, but that public concerns and suggestions had led to the examination of additional alternatives and had meaningfully shaped the review process. He further stated that the project team had intentionally ensured a thorough public process so that the final outcome would withstand scrutiny and legal challenge, even though not every member of the community would be satisfied with the result.

Mr. Thomas then asked, based on Mr. Rogers's experience, what sort of timeline residents who might be displaced could expect. Mr. Rogers advised that, if the selected option is a build-through alternative, some displacement activity could begin within a couple of years. He further explained that the project could potentially be divided into three segments and that portions such as the I-220 to Hearne Avenue segment could potentially proceed relatively quickly through a design-build process, similar to other recent state transportation projects. He noted, however, that the inner portion of the project would likely require more time because of the greater density of the affected area and the increased amount of relocation work and design considerations involved.

Mr. Thomas also expressed concern that if the interstate were to pass through neighborhoods, those communities should not simply be divided by infrastructure but should also benefit from economic development and design measures that would improve the area. In response, Mr. Rogers explained that the project has included an extensive context-sensitive solutions process, with commitments for design amenities, larger structural spans, improved flow beneath elevated structures, bikeways, pathways, greenways, and streetscape improvements in adjacent areas. He also noted that the state had made commitments related to redesign and enhancement of portions of the surrounding area and that additional agencies, including local planning entities, would likely be engaged in the design phase to ensure the surrounding community was not overlooked. Mr. Thomas thanked Mr. Rogers and offered assistance in helping ensure broad public participation when the formal hearing is scheduled.

Mr. Cothran then asked, if the project were to begin immediately, what the best estimate would be for completion of the entire project from start to finish. Mr. Rogers responded that, if design-build methods could be used for the various segments, completion could potentially occur within five to seven years, though the more urban and densely populated portions would naturally take longer.

Mr. Cothran also confirmed that citizens would still have an opportunity to voice support or opposition during the final formal public hearing. Mr. Rogers confirmed that they would, noting that the hearing would include both an open house component and a formal public hearing process, with time limits for speakers to ensure the meeting could be conducted efficiently.

Mr. Burrell then reiterated that throughout the many years he had supported the project, his consistent position had been that if a major thoroughfare were to be built through a neighborhood, then economic development should accompany it so that the affected community would be improved rather than left divided or diminished. He emphasized that any such project should result in the area being restored in better condition than before.

President G. Young then asked one final question, referencing interest from some residents in Mr. Thomas's district regarding an alternative that would involve widening infrastructure over Cross Lake. Mr. Rogers stated that such an alternative would be significantly more expensive than the other routes and would also present major concerns due to the environmental sensitivity of the lake, its function as a drinking water source, and the engineering complications associated with the existing I-49 interchange. He clarified that while one alternative had already been ruled out entirely by the Federal Highway Administration, technically all other options, including the no-build option, remain viable until a final federal decision is signed.

Mr. J. Young then observed that if the Commission is discussing economic development associated with the interstate in one area, similar attention should also be given to adjacent corridors such as Highland, South Highlands, and Queensborough, where interstate-adjacent properties have also experienced disinvestment and decline.

Before concluding the presentation, Mr. Rogers offered a personal remark directed to Mr. Jones, stating that as a father who had personally experienced the loss of a child, he could not comprehend the pain that the affected mother must be enduring. He urged the community to continue keeping the family in prayer and to remain grounded in faith.

Following the transportation discussion, Administrator Bryant informed the Commission that Mr. Guidry, Executive Director of the Head Start program, had confirmed that one of the children who died, Braylon Snow, had been a student at the Johnny L. Cochran Head Start Center, which is among the programs overseen by the Caddo Parish Commission.

COMMISSION REMARKS

- Mrs. Gage-Watts read into the record the following letter from Mr. Guidry, Executive Director Caddo Head Start:

Dear CCAA Board Members,

It is with deep sadness that I share the tragic news that the mass shooting on Sunday, April 19, 2026, claimed the life of one of our students Braylon Snow. Braylon was five years old and was enrolled for his second year at Johnny L Cochran Head Start preschool Center. He was a quiet child, yet actively engaged with his classmates. Braylon was respectful to both staff and peers, and he consistently followed directions with a positive attitude. He had a genuine love for learning and demonstrated remarkable progress. Braylon could write his name from memory, had recently mastered his vows, and was very proficient with classroom technology, including the tablet and computer.

Braylon will be deeply missed by the staff and students of the Johnny L Cochran head store preschool Center. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family during this unimaginable, difficult time. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

- Administrator Bryant then shared that the Parish had also recently lost an employee, Mr. Trayvon Chipman, a member of the Solid Waste Department, and expressed condolences to his family and coworkers, noting that the Parish would offer assistance to the department during that loss as well.
- Mr. Burrell raised concerns regarding an oil and gas access road being constructed near Lakeshore Drive, in an area near Mansfield Road and Fairway Drive. He stated that he had contacted Senator Jenkins and Representative Steven Jackson regarding the matter and explained that although prior approvals may have been granted for one site, there were concerns about additional sites and the broader traffic and safety implications of placing such infrastructure within a neighborhood. He stated that, while the City may have expressed limited authority, he believed solutions should still be pursued and indicated that he would continue working on the matter.

- Discussion regarding House Bill No. 713:

Kracman: Hey, Mr. President, uh, I just wanted to get a follow-up from, uh? From Administration for Mr. Hackney's question, which was, I mean, it's a question of mine, and I know Representative McCormick had contacted me as well, wanting to know how we have a lobbyist in Baton Rouge that's lobbying for things that we never discussed on this dais. I don't even know if we were for or against House Bill 713. When did that come through here?

Administrator Bryant: There was not a resolution that I'm aware of related to House Bill 713. I'd have to look at what was communicated with Mr. Hackney referred to. We, we do have an agreement with—we signed a short-term agreement with Dr Markey Pierre for April to September, just to have a local presence during the process. That was the short term that we signed. Um, there was some expression from Commissioners and Administration about 713, but there was no resolution against by the Commission.

Kracman: So we don't have to resolve on this body to be opposed or for something? Uh, just tell the lobbyist just to rock with it?

Administrator Bryant: Usually, we have a resolution I'll have to have that discussion about, um, ensuring that the communication we provide at the when, where it's, it's whether or not it's Administration, if it's a particular Commissioner, if it's the Commission President and making sure we're clear on who's, uh, opposing it. But that particular bill, no, we did not have a resolution by this body, but that is usually the instruction we try to get resolutions. But the Administration may say 'By the Caddo Parish Administration' may oppose something. This Administration does have the authority to oppose something, but they're not speaking for the Commission. We are fully, fully aware that I cannot speak for commission without the body, giving instruction as their position on that particular issue.

Kracman: Okay, well, that's interesting. I don't know what else was opposed or supported by this lobbying firm or whatever. Last I heard was, we didn't even have lobbying firm. You know what? Two weeks ago or whatever—

Administrator
Bryant:

We had no longer worked with the previous lobbying firm, and um, just for April through September, we did do a—it was becoming apparent to me that there are a lot of bills coming through really quickly, and that we just needed a presence there. And so, we just signed something for April through September, uh. We will look to see whether or not for a long term solution, whether or not that's, that will look to proposals to determine a long-term solution, but given we were already in session, we went ahead and used Dr. Pierre just for this short-term period.

Kracman: Okay, well, that's interesting. Thank you, Mr. President.

President
G. Young:

Well, thank you commissioner. I would say that. I'm not sure you know about the numbers, the bill numbers, but I did inform our Clerk that there were several of these, um, bills that were produced down in Baton Rouge by members of our Northwest delegation that I wrote a letter in opposition to. And of course. Um, that's my privilege, and it's also the privilege of either one of you all to write a letter in opposition or in support of a bill, as long as you are doing it with only your signature. You can do that so, but I'm not suggesting that this one in particular that you're referring to is something that I wrote a letter in opposition to.

Kracman: As a point of information, this was a lobbyist for the Parish of Caddo that was either in support or opposed to House Bill 713—something that we never discussed. We discussed a bill that was that was similar to that that was written by Thomas Presley, but we never discussed this one at all. I too have sent letters to Baton Rouge. I sent one in appreciation of a highway dedication for Virginia Evans just from me personally, but this was our lobbyist speaking for us—inadvertently, maybe on accident, I don't know, but this lobbyist spoke for this body, either in support or against a bill that we never discussed. Thank you.

President
G. Young:

Alright. Thank you. Thank you for your observation, um. Um, but I can say that at least, from my point of view, the numbers that were associated with what I opposed is rather opaque to me at this point. And, uh, we, you know, I'd be interested in following that up because I love clarity and transparency.

There was no President's Report, so the Commission moved onto New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *that Special Resolution regarding the tragic events of April 19, 2026* be adopted.

Mrs. Gage-Watts read aloud the following letter from the Black Caucus of the PJAL:

To the Honorable Members of the Caddo Parish Commission, and through you to the people of the City of Shreveport:

On behalf of the Black Caucus of the Police Jury Association of Louisiana, I extend my deepest and most heartfelt condolences to the families, loved ones, and entire community grieving the unimaginable tragedy that occurred in Shreveport on Sunday morning. The loss of eight precious children is a sorrow beyond words and a pain that reaches far beyond Parish lines.

Please know that the people of Lafayette Parish stand in prayerful solidarity with the people of Caddo Parish during this heartbreaking time. We mourn with you, we grieve with you, and we ask God to surround every wounded heart with comfort, strength, and peace.

To the families who now face days no parent or loved one should ever have to endure, we pray that the love of community and the mercy of God will carry you through the darkest hours ahead. To the children whose lives were taken far too soon, may their memories forever be a light that cannot be extinguished.

We also lift up your first responders, faith leaders, counselors, medical teams, and public servants who now carry the heavy burden of helping a community heal. Though this tragedy has shaken us all, we remain hopeful that love will speak louder than violence, that unity will rise above despair, and that healing will come in time.

Mrs. Gage-Watts then stressed the importance of moving beyond simply handing out information cards and instead establishing a more direct and visible presence in the community, such as a mobile command center where residents could go to receive assistance and resources. She stated that the community needed trained trauma professionals and “boots on the ground” immediately. Mrs. Gage-Watts also shared that she had visited with the children's grandmother that morning and emphasized that the family needed more than prayer alone—they needed love, respect, and space to grieve. She urged the

public and officials alike not to become insensitive or intrusive during what she described as an intensely private moment being lived out publicly.

Mr. Atkins then addressed the Commission. He expressed deep sadness over the incident and stated that he could not adequately put into words the sorrow caused by the tragedy. He noted that the condolences from outside the parish were meaningful and conveyed his sympathy to the affected neighborhood and community.

Mr. Burrell shared that he learned of the tragedy early that morning from his wife and described being traumatized by the news. He also stated that he had been contacted by his pastor at Galilee Baptist Church, who inquired about ways the church could support the family, especially since some of the children who were killed were related to members of the congregation. Mr. Burrell noted that the incident had drawn national and even international attention, showing the magnitude of the tragedy. He remarked that in many situations such as this, funeral expenses are not fully covered and expressed hope that the community would come together to support the family in meaningful ways.

Mr. Cothran then offered extensive remarks. He stated that words could not fully express what he was feeling, particularly because the more he learned, the more personal the tragedy became due to his connection with extended members of the family. He emphasized that although no one person can prevent every tragedy, the community and its leadership have a responsibility to put stopgaps and supports in place. He called for setting aside race, party affiliation, and politics and instead focusing on helping hurting families and communities. Mr. Cothran stated that he had received calls from across the country, including from San Francisco and Virginia, and that many people were asking what could be done next. He urged the community not to politicize the tragedy and instead respond from a place of humanity. He also stated that he intended to do everything within his power to bring together resources and make a presentation to the Commission on future steps and support mechanisms.

Mr. Epperson stated that he had grown up only a few streets from where the tragedy occurred and still had family and longtime friends in the area. He reflected on prior periods of violence in the city, including gang-related violence in earlier decades, and noted that the community had long struggled with senseless acts of violence involving children. Mr. Epperson stated that he had driven to the area, spoken with residents, and provided them with his contact information. He also noted his role with the Caddo Community Action Agency, mentioning that the agency has an emergency burial fund that may be of assistance in situations involving funeral expenses. He stated firmly that the community must not give up, but instead continue articulating solutions and working together each day—not only after tragedy strikes—to prevent similar incidents.

Mr. Jones then delivered emotional remarks concerning the tragedy, which occurred within his district and in the community where he was raised and still resides. He stated that he had remained largely at a loss for words and did not want his constituents or the affected family to believe his silence meant he did not care. Mr. Jones thanked his colleagues for reaching out to him and his community. He described the deep pain of trying to process such a devastating event as both a public servant and a parent. He shared that it had been difficult even to go to work, but that the children at the school where he serves had helped him get through the day.

Mr. Jones reflected on the pain of seeing the names of children in news reports for such a tragedy, saying that their names should instead have been called on Friday nights and at graduations. He expressed exhaustion with repeatedly having to stand before the Commission to speak about another devastating act of violence in the community. He acknowledged that while there are not always clear answers for preventing every tragedy, there are moments when action is possible, and government and community leaders must respond when they can.

He further called for the community to remain grounded in faith and unity and stated that the family would need support for the long term, not just during the immediate aftermath. Mr. Jones criticized those who used social media to spread negativity, graphic images, or exploit the pain of the family, stating that such conduct reflected the worst side of the community. He urged the public to move beyond politics, photo opportunities, and division, and to instead focus on humanity, service, and real solutions. He also encouraged the Commission and the broader community to invite grassroots leaders and people already doing the work into discussions and response efforts. He closed by urging all public servants to remember their calling to serve people above politics and to support the family and community in meaningful ways.

Throughout the discussion, the tone of the meeting was solemn and reflective. Commissioners consistently expressed sorrow, solidarity with the family, concern for the broader community, and a shared commitment to providing support and considering more substantive ways to respond to trauma and violence in the parish.

Mr. J. Young then addressed the Commission, stating that he, like others, struggled to find adequate words to express the weight of the tragedy. He thanked Mr. Jones for his earlier prayer and acknowledged Mr. Bruchun for presenting constructive ideas related to addressing domestic violence, particularly through education and early intervention among youth. Commissioner Young referenced a recent presentation before the Juvenile Justice Committee by Ms. Kelli Todd, highlighting a curriculum designed to educate students on recognizing and avoiding domestic violence. He encouraged Mrs. Blake and Mr. Cothran, who had expressed interest in developing a plan, to consider incorporating such programming into future Commission efforts.

Mr. Thomas requested that the Clerk update the Special Resolution to include the names of the children lost in the tragedy. He proceeded to read each name aloud: Jayla Elkins, 3; Shayla Elkins, 5; Kayla Pugh, 6; Layla Pugh, 7; Markaydon Pugh, 10; Sariah Snow, 11; Khedarrion Snow, 6; and Braylon Snow, 5, honoring their memory, and requested a moment of silence. The Commission observed a solemn pause in remembrance of the victims.

Following the moment of silence, Mr. Burrell offered additional remarks. He shared that he had received information indicating that a local funeral home, Precious Memories Funeral Home, had stepped forward to assist with funeral expenses, though burial costs remained outstanding. He noted that this act reflected the community coming together in support of the grieving family.

Mr. Burrell further emphasized the importance of addressing mental health, stating that while domestic violence had been discussed, mental health challenges remain a critical and often under-addressed issue. Drawing from his prior experience at the state level, he noted that mental health funding and attention have historically been insufficient. He also raised concerns about the need for stronger mental health evaluation and support systems, including within the military, noting that the individual involved in the incident was reportedly affiliated with the National Guard.

Additionally, Mr. Burrell referenced concerns related to bullying, recalling legislation he had previously sponsored addressing cyberbullying. He reflected on reports suggesting the individual may have experienced severe bullying during youth and noted the potential long-term effects of unresolved trauma. He emphasized that such experiences, combined with untreated mental health issues, can have devastating consequences.

Mr. Burrell concluded by sharing a personal account involving his nine-year-old grandson, who had learned of the tragedy through school and media coverage. He described the difficulty of explaining such a horrific event to a child, underscoring the broader emotional impact on families throughout the community.

Mrs. Blake then addressed the Commission. She expressed gratitude for being part of a body willing to listen and seek solutions during such a difficult time. She reaffirmed her strong stance on addressing domestic violence and emphasized the importance of using one's voice to educate others and connect individuals with resources and support.

Mrs. Blake shared a deeply personal experience from her childhood, recalling the loss of multiple family members at a young age and the lasting emotional impact of that trauma. She stated that this experience shaped her commitment to advocacy and service. She emphasized the Commission's responsibility to act collectively—not out of obligation, but out of a duty to serve the community, particularly vulnerable children and families without a voice.

She further stated her willingness to work collaboratively with colleagues and community members to identify meaningful solutions, acknowledging that while the Commission may not have all the answers, even small, intentional changes can make a significant difference. She concluded by reaffirming her commitment to continued service and community engagement.

Mrs. Gage-Watts requested that the Caddo Parish flag be lowered to half-staff in honor of the victims.

At this time, President G. Young requested that the Administrator Bryant provide an overview of services available to assist the affected family and community.

Parish Administrator Bryant offered condolences on behalf of the administration and outlined several forms of assistance that the Parish could provide. These included: burial assistance, if needed; relocation assistance, recognizing that returning to the residence may be emotionally difficult; and counseling services, including support for surviving family members and the child who survived the incident.

She stated that the Parish would coordinate with the Commission and other agencies to determine additional support within the scope of available programs and guidelines and would begin outreach efforts to the family.

President G. Young then offered extended remarks reflecting on the broader context of violence in society. He stated that while the tragedy felt immediate and personal, similar incidents have occurred across the nation for decades. He referenced multiple historical mass casualty events and emphasized that violence is a persistent issue in American society. He noted that the United States experiences high levels of violence compared to other nations and suggested that communities must confront difficult truths about societal priorities and cultural conditions.

He emphasized the importance of collective responsibility, stating that leaders must work toward meaningful change while also acknowledging the grief felt by the community. He concluded by affirming both a personal sense of mourning and a professional responsibility to pursue solutions.

At this time, Mr. Thomas' motion carried with Commissioners Burrell and Jones being absent.

It was **moved by Mr. J. Young**, seconded by Mr. Jones, *to englobo and move the following*

items to Thursday's agenda:

- *Ordinance 6619 of 2026, an ordinance to authorize the purchase of Lots 10 and 11, Stovall Subdivision, Unit No. 3, Shreveport, Louisiana, and to authorize the purchase of Lots 31, 32 and 33, Stovall Subdivision, Unit No. 3, Shreveport, Louisiana otherwise provide with respect thereto.*
- *Ordinance No. 6620 of 2026, an ordinance setting the parish millage for the purpose of paying principal and interest, due in 2026 on outstanding Parish Bond Issues and to instruct the Assessor to include said millage on the tax roll of the Parish of Caddo for the year 2026, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6621 of 2026, ordinance to adopt values for assessments for railways and other public service property*
- *Ordinance No. 6623 of 2026, an ordinance setting the assessment of property classified as timberlands and to instruct the assessor to include said assessment on the tax roll of the Parish of Caddo for the year 2026, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Resolution No. 30 of 2026, a resolution to amend Resolution No. 44 of 2025, giving notice of 2026 Caddo Parish Commission meeting dates, designating certain dates on the Commission calendar and otherwise providing with respect thereto*
- *Resolution No. 31 of 2026, a resolution to authorize the Caddo Parish Administrator to execute an intergovernmental agreement with the Caddo Parish Sheriff's Office to authorize and establish a PILOT Home Incarceration & Electronic Monitoring Program within the Caddo Parish Sheriff's Office for misdemeanor nonviolent offenses and to otherwise provide with respect thereto.*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition for the Stuffed Shrimp Festival*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition for the 40th anniversary of Artbreak.*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition for National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week*
- *Special Resolution declaring April as the Month of the Military Child*
- *Special Resolution declaring May 7th as the National Day of Prayer in Caddo Parish*
- *Advance the Appointment of Randy Moulton to Sewer District Board #8*
- *Property Standards Committee Recommendations: Case No. 1—4101 Ridgeway, Shreveport, LA (condemn and demolish), Case No. 2—4229 Hampton, Shreveport, LA (condemn and demolish), and Case No. 3—8930 Lake End, Mooringsport, LA (remove all inoperable vehicles and trash)*
- *Advance the approval of emergency funding in the Reserve Trust fund to provide funding to CCAA*

Mr. Burrell made reference to a recognition related to the Stuffed Shrimp Festival, noting that he believed legislation had been advanced in Baton Rouge to designate Shreveport as the Stuffed Shrimp Capital, though the final disposition was unclear.

Mr. Thomas took a moment to share with his colleagues that the week marked the kickoff of the 40th anniversary of ArtBreak. He invited Commissioners to attend a Wednesday press conference at 11:00 a.m. marking the official opening. He noted that ArtBreak would be open to students during the week and to the public during the weekend and highlighted special events including a fashion show, ArtBreak's Got Talent, and an awards ceremony. He spoke warmly of her own experience as a "child of ArtBreak" and praised the Shreveport Regional Arts Council for its forty years of service to children and youth in Caddo Parish.

At this time, Mr. J. Young's motion carried unanimously by all Commissioners.

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mr. Jones, *that Ordinance No. 6622 of 2026, an ordinance to set the General Purpose and Special Purpose Millages providing for millage rate adjustments, as allowed by Article VII, Section 23 of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974 and La R.S. 47:1705 (b), levying and imposing taxes and assessments for 2026 on all the property subject to taxation in the Parish of Caddo, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto be amended to reflect the updated language and be moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction.*

During discussion, the Parish Administrator advised that the language in the ordinance, as drafted, incorrectly referenced an increase in millage rates and reflected wording more appropriate to a roll-forward process. She explained that the Commission's actual intent was to set the millage rates for 2026 at the same rates previously established for 2025, not to increase them. Commission Clerk Everson advised that if the Commission advanced the ordinance with an amendment removing the incorrect language, the corrected version could still be timely re-advertised.

Mr. Atkins asked whether the administration intended to reserve the option to roll forward or roll back the rates. The Parish Administrator explained that the Commission had already voted in 2025 to set the rates at the maximum authorized amount and that, absent a reassessment year, the Commission was now simply setting the same rates again for 2026. She further explained that reassessment would not occur again until 2028.

At this time, Mr. Thomas' motion carried unanimously with all Commissioners present.

COMMUNIQUES & COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Announcement of Public Meeting:

Notice is hereby given that at its meeting to be held on Thursday, May 21, 2026 at 3:30 p.m. at its regular meeting place, the Government Plaza Chambers, 505 Travis Street, Shreveport, Louisiana, the Caddo Parish Commission plans to consider adopting a resolution ordering and calling an election to be held in Caddo Parish to authorize the issuance of general obligation bonds.

Announcement of Public Meeting

The Caddo Parish Commission will convene as the Caddo Parish Tax Board of Appeals on Monday, September 14, 2026 at 1pm in the Chambers at Government Plaza (505 Travis Street, Shreveport, LA 71101)

CONSENT AGENDA

- *Ordinance No. 6613 of 2026, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Public Works Fund and the Capital Outlay Fund to provide an appropriation to install welcome sign on I-20 East bound and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6614 of 2026, Zoning Case PZC 25-5-P, an ordinance to amend Volume II of the Code of Ordinances of the Parish of Caddo, as amended, the Caddo Parish Unified Development Code, by amending the zoning of property located on the west side of Wallace Lake Road, approximately 1,415 feet north of Mayo Road, Caddo Parish, LA, from R-E, Residential Estate Zoning District to C-1, Neighborhood Commercial Zoning District and I-1, Light Industrial Zoning District, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6615 of 2026, Zoning Case PZC 26-6-P, an ordinance to amend Volume II of the Code of Ordinances of the Parish of Caddo, as amended, the Caddo Parish Unified Development Code, by amending the zoning of property located on the west side of Box Road, approximately 1,700 feet south of Mt. Zion Road, Caddo Parish, LA, from C-4 Heavy Commercial Zoning District to I-2, Heavy Industrial Zoning District, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6616 of 2026, 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*

There were no Citizens Comments (late arrivals). At this time, there was no further discussion to come before the Commission, so the Commission adjourned at 6:15 p.m.



Michelle Nations
Assistant Commission Clerk