

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 16TH DAY OF MARCH, 2026

The Caddo Parish Veterans Affairs met in legal session on the above date at 2:45 p.m., in the Government Plaza Chambers, with the following members present constituting a quorum: Commissioners Blake, Cothran, Epperson, Thomas, and G. Young (5). ABSENT: None (0).

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

- *Discussion of postage stamp in honor of Col. Steven dePyssler*

Commissioner Ken Epperson explained that they had been trying to get a postage stamp made in Colonel dePyssler's honor for about four years. He said the main criteria is that the individual must be deceased for two years. He continued to explain that this is an important issue for showing support for veterans, and that he would like to get the surrounding cities and parishes to pass similar resolutions of support for a postage stamp and then lobby the issue to various state and federal representatives and senators. He highlighted Colonel dePyssler's veteran's ceremony, which would draw over a thousand veterans each year. Commissioner Victor Thomas said that he would also suggest getting letters of support from nearby military bases, the governor's office, committees of the National Association of Counties, and other national groups. Commissioner Gregory Young suggested that they provide a template of this resolution to the relevant entities to sign off for support. Mr. Cothran mentioned that Colonel dePyssler affected many civilians in addition to veterans all over the country, so they should send this to neighboring states as well. Mr. Epperson mentioned a packet detailing the Colonel's achievements and impact for each, and highlighted that he volunteered at Barksdale Air Force Base for 47 years with no pay. Commissioner Grace Anne Blake asked if they could get all of this information in writing in a format to mail to all of the relevant entities. She suggested they should individually create a list of agencies they wish to contact and reach out to those entities themselves. Mr. Epperson said they will do that.

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mr. G. Young, *to direct staff to create a joint proclamation request packet to be distributed to other agencies by May 1st, 2026, with a draft available by April 15th, 2026, to build regional support for a postage stamp in honor of Colonel Steven dePyssler.*

Mr. Cothran asked if it would possible to make a web page detailing Colonel dePyssler's story to spread awareness. Mr. Epperson said that would be doable, and mentioned that there used to be a web page which listed all veterans in Shreveport. He said they should focus on the issue of the stamp for now.

At this time, Mr. Thomas' motion carried unanimously.

- *Dedication of commemorative plaque at Northwest Louisiana Veterans Cemetery recognizing Caddo Parish's donation of land for the site*

Mr. Epperson explained the background of the Northwest Louisiana Veterans Cemetery. 81.361 acres of land was donated by the Parish for the cemetery in the year 2000. He explained that there was very little veteran cemetery space left in the state prior to the Commission getting a resolution on the floor of the NACO conference, and securing \$3.5 million from Congress. He said he put in an expansion grant for \$3.5 million which was approved. He mentioned that they put in crypts for larger veterans, which they were lacking before. He explained that he would like to have a formal dedication of the plaque commemorating the Parish's donation.

It was **moved by Mr. G. Young**, seconded by Mr. Cothran, *to recommend to the full body to direct Administration to hold on May 21st, 2026, a dedication of a plaque commemorating Caddo Parish's donation of land at the Northwest Louisiana Veterans Cemetery.*

Mr. G. Young said that he believes it is important that the proper people get credit for this. For clarification, Mr. Cothran asked when the donation happened and if they were talking about bringing in the Commissioners from that time for this dedication. Mr. Epperson answered that the donation occurred on October 27th, 2000, and that he does wish to bring in the Commissioners from that time.

At this time, Mr. G. Young's motion carried unanimously.

- *Any other pertinent information regarding Veterans*

Mr. Epperson explained that there was an ordinance for introduction on the agenda for this day's Work Session which would appropriate \$75,000 to install a welcome sign on I-20 eastbound that includes a message denoting Caddo Parish as veteran friendly. Mr. G. Young asked why the cost is so high. Mr. Epperson cited quality and mentioned the two existing similar signs on I-49 which costed \$144,000. Mrs. Blake said she supports this and would like to make it as cost-effective as possible. She said she thinks it is important to make sure that people know Caddo Parish is supportive of veterans and they are welcome to stay here. Mr. Epperson mentioned the amount of money they have spent on various other veteran-related amenities. He said that the parish is competitive in drawing veterans. Mrs. Blake asked if they had an exact figure for the cost of the sign. Mr. Epperson said this is a close estimate. Mr. Thomas suggested that they incorporate some form of solar powered lighting for the sign. Mr. G. Young said that while he is a veteran himself and is an advocate for veterans, he is concerned that \$75,000 for a sign may not signify that they really care about veterans. He said he thinks there are more meaningful ways that they could allocate \$75,000 for veterans. Mrs. Blake asked if they could get an exact figure for the cost of the sign. Assistant Administrator Clay Walker said that the figure given is based on an estimate from the Facilities & Maintenance department and that they will give that report to each of the Commissioners following this meeting. Commission Clerk Jeff Everson clarified the timeline for adoption of this ordinance. The discussion of this matter ended with no vote.

Mr. Epperson asked if the Committee would be amenable to the development of a resource for veterans services similar to the Parish's disaster response booklet.

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mr. Cothran, *to consider drafting a veterans services booklet.*

Mrs. Blake asked if it was possible to make the booklet accessible on the Parish website. Mr. Epperson answered that would be possible. Mr. Cothran thanked Mr. Epperson for this suggestion, explaining that he had attended a veterans meeting at a recent conference and learned very beneficial information that he was not aware of as a veteran himself.

At this time, Mr. Thomas' motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:27 p.m.



Clayton McGee
Administrative Specialist