

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
AUDIT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 9TH DAY OF APRIL, 2026

The Caddo Parish Public Safety Committee met in legal session on the above date at 2:30 p.m., in the Government Plaza Chambers, with the following members present constituting a quorum: Commissioners Atkins, Blake, Cothran, Jones, and G. Young (4). 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

- *Recommendation regarding 2026 Caddo Parish Internal Audit Plan*

Director of Finance Hayley Barnett explained that she and Parish Administrator Erica Bryant had discussed the proposed 2026 audit items with the internal auditors. She said the first proposed item was an Artificial Intelligence policy assessment. Mrs. Barnett stated that Caddo Parish does not currently have an artificial intelligence policy and that there is a push at the state level for public entities to develop such policies. She said that as artificial intelligence becomes more available, more potential uses will become available to different Parish departments. Mrs. Barnett explained that the AI audit would be advisory in nature. She said it would look at how the Parish currently uses artificial intelligence, how the Parish could use artificial intelligence, and what policies should accompany that use.

Mrs. Barnett said the second proposed audit item was the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Unit, also known as CVEU, which is a unit within Public Works. She explained that the CVEU issues permits and fines related to heavy loads on parish roads. She said that although the unit is relatively new, it has been in place long enough to be audited to ensure that the Parish is following best practices.

Commissioner John Atkins asked whether the Parish has only one Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Unit. Mrs. Barnett confirmed that it does. Commissioner Ron Cothran asked whether the Sheriff's Office also performs this type of commercial vehicle enforcement or if the Parish effort duplicates the Sheriff's work. Director of Public Works Tim Weaver explained that the Parish has one officer, who is deputized or commissioned by the Sheriff's Office. He stated that the Sheriff's Office does not separately perform the same work and that there is no duplication. Mr. Atkins asked Mr. Weaver to explain what the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Unit monitors and what its role is. Mr. Weaver said the unit has been operating since 2010. He explained that during the first year, the Parish issued warnings instead of tickets in order to educate the public and commercial operators. He said the main purpose of the unit is to keep parish roads safe by addressing unsecured loads, overweight loads, posted bridges, and heavy loads traveling over roads and bridges that may not be designed to handle them. Mr. Weaver said that if damage occurs to parish roads, the unit helps identify which company is responsible so that the Parish can seek reimbursement. Mr. Atkins recalled that when the unit was originally proposed, the expectation was that fees collected would pay for the unit and its employee. Mr. Weaver said the fees more than cover the cost. He said the Parish splits fines with the Sheriff's Office, but that the fines are not very large and the unit is primarily about road safety, road protection, and accountability. Mr. Weaver stated that there is pending legislation related to commercial vehicle enforcement because many municipalities and parishes do not have CVEU units. He noted that some parishes, including DeSoto Parish, do not have such a unit. Commissioner Gregory Young asked about the scope and jurisdiction of the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Unit. He asked whether the unit enforces the rules only on parish roads, rather than state highways or city streets. Mr. Weaver confirmed that the unit's authority applies only to parish roads.

Mr. G. Young asked about roads near anticipated data center construction, including Highway 169 and Highway 80, where heavy equipment traffic is expected. Mr. Weaver explained that traffic on Highway 80 would mainly involve state roads, while the Highway 169 area would involve parish roads.

He said Public Works has been speaking with the data center about establishing a haul route in order to limit damage to one road instead of having trucks use several different routes. He said trucks may also come in from Texas, and the Parish is working through those issues. Mr. G. Young asked whether the Parish makes arrangements with operators before they begin using parish roads, such as requiring funds to be placed in escrow for anticipated road damage. Mr. Weaver said the Parish does not require a bond or escrow, but it monitors roads before activity begins. He said Public Works rides and videos the roads in advance so that the Parish has documentation in case damage occurs. He stated that most roads hold up during fracking activity, but some do not. He said the Parish was in negotiations with a larger oil company regarding an invoice for road damage and that the company appeared likely to pay the full bill.

Mr. Cothran asked whether the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Unit primarily looks at weight and what commercial vehicles are doing to parish roads. Mr. Weaver said that is correct, but the unit also looks at vehicle safety issues, including tires, axle weights, and posted bridges. He explained that when a company wants to travel to a site, the Parish may provide a haul route directing the company away from certain roads or bridges. Mr. Weaver said that Highway 169 has two posted bridges, requiring some traffic to take alternate routes. He said one road is not holding up under repeated heavy use, even though the trucks are not overweight. He explained that the repetitive loads over time are causing damage.

Mr. Cothran asked whether the CVEU officer carries scales. Mr. Weaver said the unit has multiple certified scales, which must be sent off for certification. He said he attended a certified school in Maryland and that the Parish has been performing this work since 2010 with one officer.

Mr. Weaver also recognized Ms. Toya Edwards, who helps run the office and handles permitting through her office. He said the unit has been successful in educating commercial operators, noting that fines are lower now than they were previously. He said permit activity can vary depending on the oil industry, but that permits more than cover the department's costs.

Mr. G. Young said he hoped the Parish would see more of this type of issue in the future because the Parish anticipates more heavy truck activity over the next decade. He said that is a good problem to have, but that the Parish must also perform due diligence and have an enforcement policy in place to protect roads and recover costs for citizens. Mr. Weaver said that when he first came to the Parish, many parish roads would not hold up to oil and gas activity. He said that during the Haynesville Shale period, through the work of the Commission and taxpayers, the Parish pursued aggressive bridge and road improvement programs. He said the Parish used to have many wooden bridges and single-span bridges, but has made significant improvements. He said Caddo Parish is now among the top parishes with respect to roads and bridges, including the low number of posted bridges and the quality of parish roads. He noted that out of approximately 760 miles of parish roads, only about three miles remain gravel, compared with roughly 150 miles of gravel roads 30 years ago.

Mr. Atkins asked Mrs. Barnett where the Parish is in its audit schedule cycle, observing that the Parish seems to be moving further down the list of audit topics. He asked whether the Parish would circle back to higher-impact areas in the near future. Mrs. Barnett said she did not know whether that would happen in the near future, but that all areas would eventually cycle through again. She said there are still a handful of items that have not yet been audited, including smaller items such as the CVEU. She said that next year the Parish may want to focus on Walter B. Jacobs, after having a year of experience with that facility, to make sure there are not areas that could be improved or tidied up. She said the Parish can also revisit the risk assessment process and identify additional top contenders for future internal audits. Mrs. Barnett said there will always be high-volume transaction areas that the Parish may want to review, but that the Parish is also trying to ensure that even smaller areas are touched so that the Parish can confirm it is doing the best it can across all areas. Mr. Atkins said he appreciated the desire to do the best possible work in all areas, but noted that there are economies of scale to consider. He said Walter B. Jacobs was a large capital project and that there are likely lessons to be learned and savings to be had in future projects. Mrs. Bryant said the audit process will be continual because it is required by the Parish Charter. She said even when departments appear to be running smoothly, an internal audit may still identify issues. She said departments will periodically be subject to some type of internal audit because that is what the Charter requires.

It was **moved by Mr. Cothran**, seconded by Mr. G. Young, *to recommend to the full body approval of the proposed internal audit schedule for 2026.* The motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. McGee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Clayton McGee
Administrative Specialist