

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
OF THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION
HELD ON THE 3rd DAY OF AUGUST, 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 invocation and Pledge of Allegiance were given during a previous committee meeting. There were no Agenda Additions.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Belinda Rose came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

Good afternoon. Belinda Rose, 810 East 70th Street, Suite A. I want to say I live in Cedar Grove, and I've lived in Cedar Grove by way of Pine Valley for 59-plus years. More negative news is reported than good. Many times, unnecessary comments are made because an individual is not from the area or could care less about the area. We stand to support the efforts of Commissioner Cothran for thinking highly of Miss B with regards to her retirement from the city. She made no big deal of her retirement. Miss B quietly went home. Many citizens that had no idea she had retired until camp started this summer. A faithful and still very active member of Cedar Grove community who truly enjoyed every participant in every activity at the AB Palmer Recreation Center. Miss B gives extra time in volunteering. It is necessary in my community to recognize a person with such humility and faithfulness, and I ask for you today, please support Commissioner Cothran in passing this resolution. Thank you for your consideration.

There were no Visitors.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

- Intergovernmental Meeting—August 28, 11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m., Walter B. Jacobs Event Center. Tour of the Nature Center to follow.

Administrator Bryant reminded the Commissioners that the Intergovernmental Meeting will be held on August 28th at the Walter B. Jacobs Event Center.

- Juvenile Detention Center census

Administrator Bryant said that there are 12 children in the Detention Center, one of which is OJJ. There are no 17 year olds. There are 413 children on probation. Seventeen juveniles are at CCC.

COMMISSION REMARKS

- Mrs. Gage-Watts discussed the status of the Caddo Youth Leadership Academy (CYLA). Administrator Bryant advised that the program remains active and will resume with the start of the new school year. Returning participants will continue in the program through graduation, and information regarding new applications and upcoming meetings will be distributed once schools reconvene. Mrs. Gage-Watts emphasized the importance of informing current participants that the program will continue uninterrupted.

- Administrator Bryant addressed misinformation circulating regarding a proposed pickleball election. It was clarified that no pickleball election will appear on the November ballot. Instead, voters will consider a bond proposition to finance construction of a sports complex. Design work for the project continues as planned.

- Commissioners requested that information regarding new state laws taking effect on August 1 be made available on the Parish website. Administrator Bryant announced that Dr. Pierre would provide a legislative update during the August 20 meeting covering legislation affecting parish government.

Administration confirmed that meetings with the sports complex design team will be scheduled following approval of the final agreement with the YMCA in order to allow commissioners to provide input during the design process.

Administratio also announced that the budget retreat sessions would be held in September, followed by introduction of the proposed budget in late October, a public hearing in November, and final adoption in early December. Citizens will have opportunities to participate through public meetings, the public hearing, online publication of the proposed budget, and printed copies available at the library.

- Mr. Epperson reminded residents to review newly received voter registration cards for accuracy and to remain aware of recent election law changes that may affect voting procedures.

- Mr. Thomas reported that the Appropriations Committee received updated from approximately 73 of the 84 organizations funded through the Parish's appropriations and economic

development programs. He noted that the presentations strengthened communication between recipient organizations and the Commission while providing valuable insight into the impact of parish funding.

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

NEW BUSINESS

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mr. Atkins, to amend the language of Ordinance No. 6638 of 2026 to read the following: an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Riverboat Fund and the Oil & Gas Fund to provide an appropriation of \$10,000 for Volunteers of America, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto be moved to Thursday's Regular Session for introduction.

Mr. Thomas read aloud the following statement:

Dear Colleagues,

Over the past several weeks, I have had the privilege of participating in many conversations that reminded me what is possible when a community chooses collaboration.

At the invitation of Chase Bank, nonprofit organizations, public agencies, and community leaders came together to discuss the challenges facing our neighborhoods. One topic quickly rose to the forefront, despite the incredible number of back-to-school drives, backpack giveaways, and school supply events held throughout Caddo Parish each year, too many children still walk into their classrooms on the first day of school without everything they need to be successful.

No one in the room questioned whether our community cares. The issue isn't a lack of generosity, it's that our efforts often happen independently rather than collectively. Instead of asking, "What is your organization doing?" the conversation became, "What can we accomplish together?"

From that discussion, the Set Up for Success pilot initiative was born. This year, our goal is simple but powerful: ensure that every student at Booker T. Washington High School arrives on the first day of school with a backpack containing every item on their required school supply list.

This initiative has brought together an extraordinary coalition of partners, including Chase Bank, the City of Shreveport through Community Development Director Verni Howard, Volunteers of America Northwest Louisiana, Caddo Schools administration, myself, and many dedicated volunteers. Together, we are proving that public-private partnerships can accomplish more than any one organization can achieve alone. But today, I am asking you to help make this vision a reality.

Imagine the impact if every student walked into class and found a backpack waiting in their chair, filled with every notebook, folder, pencil, calculator, and supply they need. Imagine the relief for parents and grandparents struggling to stretch already limited household budgets. Imagine teachers beginning the school year KNOWING every student is equipped equally, allowing them to focus on teaching instead of addressing unmet needs.

That is more than a backpack. It is dignity. It is confidence. It is equity. It is an investment in a child's opportunity to succeed.

More importantly, this is not intended to be a one-time project. Booker T. Washington High School is only the beginning. Our vision is to build a sustainable model that can expand throughout Caddo Parish and each of your districts, encouraging businesses, nonprofits, civic organizations, churches, and community groups to adopt schools and work together to ensure every child starts the school year prepared.

If this pilot succeeds, we won't simply have distributed backpacks. We will have created a blueprint for collaboration that can be replicated across every corner of our parish.

As elected officials, we are often asked to support initiatives that promise long-term returns. Few investments offer a greater return than one that places the tools for learning directly into the hands of our children.

I respectfully ask for your support of this funding request. Your approval is not simply an investment in school supplies, it is an investment in our students, in the families of Caddo, in the dedicated educators, and most importantly the future of Caddo Parish. Together, we can ensure that every child begins the school year with confidence, and every family knows their community stands beside them. I hope you will join me in making Set Up for Success more than a program. Let's make it a movement.

Mr. Atkins

Mr. Burrell discussed the increasing financial burden of school supplies on families, with several members noting that costs have risen significantly in recent years. Support was expressed for initiatives that reduce those expenses and improve educational opportunities for students.

Mr. Cothran raised questions regarding distribution methods, accountability, and whether concentrating resources on a single school was appropriate. In response, it was explained that the pilot would ensure every student at Booker T. Washington High School receives supplies directly through the school, while additional organizations continue supporting other schools throughout the parish. Mr. Thomas emphasized that the pilot is intended to establish a collaborative model that can be expanded parishwide in future years.

Additional discussion addressed community partnerships, Title I funding, use of official school supply lists, and the role of Volunteers of America in coordinating the initiative. Commissioners expressed appreciation for the collaborative effort while seeking clarification regarding existing parish appropriations and oversight of the program.

Mr. Thomas provided additional information regarding the financial commitments received from community partners, explaining that contributions from Chase Bank, the City of Shreveport, Volunteers of America, and other organizations had significantly reduced the total project cost. He emphasized the importance of ensuring that both public and private partners contribute meaningfully to the initiative and requested that a complete accounting of partner contributions be provided prior to final consideration.

Mrs. Gage-Watts discussed the value of developing a coordinated parishwide approach to identifying student needs through collaboration with Caddo Parish Public Schools. She noted that school administrators and counselors are often best positioned to identify students requiring assistance and suggested that future efforts prioritize schools based on demonstrated need while reducing duplication among various backpack drives.

Additional discussion focused on opportunities to engage more corporate and community partners in future years, including potential support for specific educational needs such as scientific calculators and other classroom materials. Mr. Thomas expressed support for developing a sustainable, data-driven model that could expand to additional schools throughout Caddo Parish.

Mr. Jones noted that the ordinance was being considered only for advancement and emphasized that additional discussion and public input would occur prior to final adoption. Commissioners agreed that further review would allow time to gather additional information before taking final action.

At this time, Mr. Thomas' amended motion carried unanimously with all Commission members present.

It was **moved by Mr. Atkins**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *that Resolution No. 48 of 2026, a resolution approving the holding of an election in Caddo Parish Fire District No. 5, State of Louisiana, on Saturday, December 12, 2026, to authorize the levy of service charges therein* be moved to Thursday's Regular Session for consideration.

Substitute motion by Mr. J. Young, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *to englobe and move the following items to Thursday's Regular Session for consideration:*

- *Resolution No. 48 of 2026, a resolution approving the holding of an election in Caddo Parish Fire District No. 5, State of Louisiana, on Saturday, December 12, 2026, to authorize the levy of service charges therein*
- *Resolution No. 49 of 2026, a resolution to authorize the Caddo Parish Administrator to direct and authorize the Louisianan State Mineral & Energy Board and the Office of Mineral Resources to accept nominations, advertise for, accept and award bids, and execute all oil, gas, and mineral leases on certain mineral interests owned by the Parish of Caddo, and otherwise providing with respect thereto*
- *Resolution No. 50 of 2026, a resolution to relocate the polling place for Precincts No. 7-1, 12-2, and 12-6 from Western Hills Baptist Church, 4153 Pines Road, Shreveport, LA 71119 and Precinct 12-1 from the West Shreveport Memorial Library Branch, 4380 Pines Road, Shreveport, LA 71119 to Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, 3939 Pines Road, Shreveport, LA 71119 and otherwise providing with respect thereto*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition Mr. Curtis Joseph*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition Baronette Atkins-Robinson*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition Caddo Parish Poll Commissioners and Election Workers*
- *Direct Administration to perform a review of Caddo investments and support of efforts to address youth housing the prevention of homelessness with an emphasis*

on unhoused youth

- *Authorize Shannon Pillow, United Through Fitness & Education, as a Visitor for Thursday's Regular Session*
- *Appointment of Michael Keith Cross to the Black Bayou Watershed Commission to fill the seat previously held by Charles Reynolds. Term to expire August 14, 2031.*
- *Reappointments of Elmer Moreau, Ronnie Festavan, David Hale, Sr., and Charles Barr to the Black Bayou Watershed Commission. Terms to expire August 14, 2031.*

Mrs. Gage-Watts requested that Administration conduct a comprehensive review of current youth investment commitments and homelessness task force responsibilities, including funding, implementation status, partner obligations, measurable outcomes, service gaps, and recommendations for future action, with a written report to be presented within ninety (90) days. It was noted that a formal resolution would be presented at a future meeting.

Additional Commissioners were added as co-sponsors to various agenda items prior to the vote.

At this time, Mr. J. Young's substitute motion carried unanimously with all Commission members present.

COMMUNIQUE & COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Mr. Jones, Chair of the Special Projects Committee, reported on discussions regarding the Unified Development Code (UDC) and clarified that the committee had not discussed implementing parishwide rural zoning. Rather, the committee focused on reviewing existing ordinances, addressing issues related to temporary workforce housing ("man camps"), and evaluating future participation in the UDC process. Additional stakeholder discussions are anticipated before further action is considered.
- Mrs. Blake, Chair of the Natural Resources Committee, reported receiving public comments regarding proposed data center developments. The committee intends to work with Administration to develop a centralized information portal on the Parish website to provide residents with updates and information concerning data center projects and related development activities.
- Mr. Kracman commented on the earlier Natural Resources Committee meeting, expressing concerns that the discussion had not been productive and emphasizing the Commission's responsibility to address constituents' concerns regarding proposed data center developments. He stated that he has sought to provide factual information to his constituents and encouraged continued dialogue regarding the projects. Mr. Kracman also discussed issues related to the Unified Development Code (UDC), parishwide zoning, and the proposed revision of the Five-Mile Boundary Master Plan, reiterating his preference for addressing development issues through ordinances rather than broader zoning changes. He further stressed the importance of transparency, thorough public discussion, and careful evaluation of future tax incentive requests associated with proposed data center projects before public funds are committed.
- Mr. Cothran reminded motorists that schools will reopen the following week and encouraged the public to observe school zone speed limits and remain alert for school buses.
- Mr. Jones expressed condolences to the family of a fourteen-year-old victim of a recent fatal shooting and encouraged the community to promote responsible firearm ownership, prevent youth access to firearms, and work together to reduce youth violence. He urged residents to support affected families and to speak up when they are aware of illegal activity involving firearms.

CITIZENS COMMENTS (LATE ARRIVALS)

Matthew Alexander came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

My name's Matt Alexander. I live at 178 Carrollton, Shreveport. Okay, so let's recap the Natural Resources Committee meeting. Okay, so let me just say, whereas y'all might not be listening to me, I am listening to y'all. So, let's start there. It is true. Commissioner Blake, you read an Amazon and STACK press release. That was very unimpressive. You talked about assuaging people's concerns rather than addressing them. Also very unimpressive. You discussed that Amazon has assured that they're going to be great neighbors. Well, they've said they're not great neighbors. So, either Amazon's lying or they're lying. And I kind of feel like they're not lying. Let me paint a picture for you of the world we live in. You've got hyperinflation going on. You've got a president suggesting that instead of there not being affordable housing, just take out a 50-year mortgage. So, you've also got four million kids just cut from food stamps today. And y'all's solution is to bring in a data center that's going to make utility prices higher, waste valuable water resources, which by my calculations among the three parishes, the proposed data centers are going to use up about 50,000 people's worth of water. So, your economic plan for population growth, you've just already sunk 50,000 possible people. Okay, let's start here as well around the affordability crisis. What do you think is going to happen in Blanchard when landlords decide they can charge temporary workers, that

they know how much they're making, an arm and a leg for rent? Don't you think that's going to upset the renters' market that already exists that people can barely afford now? Have you considered that? Have you considered what this is going to do to people that already live here? It doesn't seem like as a whole this body has found a way to create a sustainable economy. What you've created is carpet bagger capitalism where it's okay to sacrifice people for corporations. You said that City Bank couldn't cut a check because they didn't have time. How long does it take to write a zero on a check, dude? That's not a real excuse. Just say they're greedy and don't want to share their money. And just, you made a good point. Amazon and STACK. Oh, they gave \$250,000. That's literally .0000001% of their wealth. Y'all need to get y'all's math straight.

Mary May came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

Good afternoon. My name is Mary May. I'm from the State Line Road community in rural undeveloped Caddo Parish. I just had a comment about something that you, Mr. Young, a comment that you made earlier in the Natural Resources Committee. You said that you don't want someone coming and telling you what to do on your private land. These people bought this land. They should be able to do with it what they want because they are not in a zoning area where they can be told that. But then you also said that, or someone on the committee said that they were going to be good neighbors. I own seven acres of private land and I don't want anybody to come and tell me what to do on my land, but as a neighbor I'm also very conscious of my other neighbors and I try to be a good neighbor. And they haven't shown us that they're going to be good neighbors yet. I don't know if maybe they put that in writing somewhere. If y'all could provide that to us or possibly the greeting card where they wrote it and sent it out in the mail because we on State Line Road did not get it. You also made a comment about putting our cell phones down if we are against the data centers and I don't think that the cell phone has anything to do with what's going to be going on with the data center. I think that's miscommunication. We see that a lot on social media. And then as far as Miss Blake, I wanted to comment that you said you went on a fact-finding mission for the two months that we waited for you to call a Natural Resources Committee meeting. Will you be providing the facts that you found in that two months in writing to us so that we can go over what you found and what you learned? If you could provide that to us in writing so that we could look at it and go over it as well. We'd like to know what you know. Thank you.

Amanda Bison came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

I live on State Line Road, Caddo Parish. First, I want to make something very clear to y'all. I'm not against data centers. I'm not against the advancement of technology. As a mother and now a grandmother and somebody that works in the healthcare field with technology, I know and understand that our future generations will depend on technology. Progress is not the enemy. What I am against is a community being left in the dark while decisions that will change our lives forever are made without the people who actually live here. In 2004, I was a Shreveport girl, born and raised in Caddo Parish, and I fell in love with a State Line Road country boy. For the past 21 years, State Line Road has been my home. It's where I raised my daughters. I learned the value of hard work and neighbors, helping neighbors, and where my husband's family has owned land for over a hundred years. This isn't just property to us. It's our history. It's our memories. It's our family. On June 9th, 2023, I watched my 36-year-old husband take his last breath. His last view was on State Line Road. You can walk out there. I have a cross out for him directly in front of the data center. The last place Clint saw was State Line Road. He came home from there as a newborn, and he came home one final time to be laid to rest besides generations of his family. That's what this land means to us. Yet, we weren't invited into this conversation. We weren't asked. We weren't informed. We simply woke up one day to discover that our lives were about to change. As citizens, we're expected to answer questions every day. Why shouldn't billion-dollar corporations and public officials approving these projects be expected to show us the same honesty and transparency to the people whose lives that they're affecting? Today, our roads are filled with 18-wheelers. Many of us have witnessed speeding trucks, trucks running stop signs. My kids, our grandchildren, neighbors use these roads every day. Our privacy is feeling invaded. Our roads are being damaged and many residents feel their concerns have been dismissed. So, I ask, who is protecting the people who already live here? We're not asking anyone to stop progress. We're asking that progress include the people who will have to deal with the consequences there after the construction and everyone else is gone. We're asking for honesty instead of secrecy, respect instead of dismissal. Because before this project became on anyone's map or a blueprint on anyone's desk, it was our home and it still is. Thank you.

Tommy Bison came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

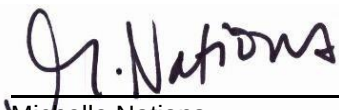
My name is Tommy Bison. 5530 North State Line Road. Y'all talked about the police in the community and let me tell you about the residents that are out here. I've lived there for 46 years. The man she was just talking about is my baby brother, my youngest brother, her husband. I've walked this road for 46 years. The cemetery where he lays at rest is at the top of the hill about a quarter-mile or so from my driveway. So, two weeks ago on July 9th or a month or so ago on July 9th, I'm walking up the road to the cemetery like I do walking my dog. Just today, that day, I decided to record as I walked up here to the cemetery. Just the devastation that's going on across the road from my home. Didn't say anything to anyone. Never spoke to anyone. Never caused a disturbance. And had the police called on me for video recording. Had these data center employees told lies. It's in the arrest record. And I have the video that proves my innocence. For over an hour I walked to the cemetery and I walked back and I bothered no one. And I was arrested for this by our Caddo Parish. They chose, they went over there and they took the word of these lies of these employees over the word of a citizen that had evidence. Simply put, they chose dollars over evidence. They're getting paid to be there to protect these people, I have a flock camera right across the road from my house, 40 yards across the road from my house that's recording my every move. I can't

open my front door without these cameras capturing. This is, I was arrested for disturbing the peace. I encourage all of you, go to Scotty Bison. Look at the videos. Make your own minds up on whether or not I committed a crime. Please, I beg of you, watch these videos of what your deputies chose to do to a citizen over a corporation. Chose that corporation and their money over looking at my evidence. I told him, "If you'll watch 10 minutes of that, this whole thing will be over with." He didn't want to watch my evidence. He took the word of this other boy over here across the road that's on the payroll over the citizen with the evidence that clears me. So, I have a lawyer now. We're fighting Caddo Parish Sheriff's Department and it'll come out just what's done, how y'all are treating the citizens, how this Caddo Parish is treating their citizens, your constituents. Thank you all.

CONSENT AGENDA

- *Ordinance No. 6629 of 2026, PZC Case No. 26-12-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 west side of Cypress Garden Road, approximately 681 feet south of Willow Ridge Road, Caddo Parish, Louisiana, from R-MHP Residential Manufactured Home Park District to R-A Rural Agricultural District, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No 6630, an ordinance relative to the sale of parish property, to authorize the sale of the Regional Lab Building located at 533 Vine Street, Shreveport, Louisiana, and adjacent parking lots and otherwise providing with respect thereto.*
- *Ordinance No 6631, an ordinance to enact section 32-62 through 32-65 of chapter 32 – offenses and miscellaneous provisions of the Code of Ordinances of the Parish of Caddo, relative to offenses on SPORTRAN buses traveling within unincorporated areas of Caddo Parish, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No 6632, an ordinance to expand the use of certain parish property to the David Raines Community Health Center, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6633, an ordinance to deem property surplus and to authorize the parish administrator, or her designee, to sell surplus property owned by the Parish of Caddo, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto.*
- *Ordinance No. 6634, an ordinance amending and re-enacting division 3 of Article V, chapter 2 of the Code of Ordinances relative to the procedures for the sale of adjudicated property pursuant to La. R.S. 47:2201, et seq., to delete the exemption for district three, and otherwise providing with respect thereto.*
- *Ordinance No. 6636, an ordinance to authorize the Parish Administrator to finalize the lease of certain property owned by the YMCA of Northwest Louisiana, 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 5:01 p.m.



Michelle Nations
Assistant Commission Clerk