MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
OF THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSON
HELD ON THE 16TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 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, Kracman, Lazarus, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (11). ABSENT: Commissioner Jones (1).

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

AGENDA ADDITIONS

It was **moved by Mrs. Gage-Watts,** seconded by Mr. Cothran, *that the agenda be expanded and Ordinance No. 6681 of 2026, an ordinance to deem property surplus and authorize the sale of surplus property owned by the Parish of Caddo, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be added under New Business.

A public hearing was opened regarding the proposed additions. There being no one else to speak in favor or against the Agenda Additions, President G. Young closed the public hearing.

At this time, Mrs. Gage-Watts' motion carried unanimously with Commissioners Burrell, Jones, and J. Young being absent.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

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

Good evening, Commissioners. Jon Glover, 9100 Walker Road, Apartment 217, Shreveport, Louisiana, zip code 71118. When I went over the agenda for today, I was like, with the New Business, the advancing of the introductions, Ordinance number 6680. I wanted to know the focus of this legislation, in layman's terms, if you will. You want to create and establish, or legal does want to create and establish a land bank authority, and it is seemingly to address housing and economic development. Can someone share with me the intimacy of what this is speaking to and how it will impact the citizens of Caddo Parish, myself definitely included. Then, Resolution 61 of 2026. Seemingly, members are being asked to support the St. Tammany legislation that is before the Louisiana Supreme Court. And I was looking at the language of that, also. And then I did my own homework, and I saw that there were some specifics that St. Tammany was addressing here. And I asked myself the question and did some homework to find out the Commission could've done this themselves, too, yet they did not do what St. Tammany is doing now, but you want to join in, I guess, to say that we're on board with what you're trying to accomplish. I need to understand how is it that we will align ourselves with what we didn't or had an opportunity to do. Now we're projecting it as, we're here for you. Then, the legislation, the public hearings. I wanted to know some specifics about these amendments that are being addressed for the 2026 budget. The fact sheet didn't give any particular numbers for the first legislation, which I think is going to be Ordinance 6678. I just need to understand what's driving this legislation, and how will it impact me, a citizen, and then the legislation 6679. I want to know what prompted that legislation. What is it that the $125,000 is going to be expended towards. I do see that Northwest Louisiana Food Bank, but I need to understand the significance of this, because last year you did something similar. It was an emergency, SNAP program. What is it this time that we're addressing under the guise of Northwest Louisiana Food Bank? Thank you.

VISITORS

- *Mike Spence, Caddo Parish Clerk of Court*
  Dale Sibley, Caddo Parish Registrar of Voters

Commissioners received an update from Caddo Parish Clerk of Court Mike Spence and Registrar of Voters Dale Sibley regarding issues experienced during the recent election, voting equipment, polling locations, and preparations for the December 12, 2026 election.

Mr. Thomas thanked both offices for their work and responsiveness during the election. He requested information regarding voting machine problems, voter access, and preparations for the upcoming election. Mr. Sibley advised that early voting would begin Saturday, November 28, 2026, and continue for seven days, excluding Sunday, with the same locations, hours, and procedures.

Mr. Spence explained that the lengthy ballot slowed the operation of the voting machines, which dated to 1991, and contributed to equipment problems and lines. Most machines were repaired during Election Day, although some remained out of service. He reported that the Secretary of State planned to test new voting equipment through a pilot program in several parishes before proceeding with a broader rollout. He expressed hope that Caddo Parish would receive priority due to its number of precincts.

Mr. Spence encouraged Commissioners and voters to report election concerns directly to his office so staff could investigate and respond promptly. He stated that eight employees staffed the office's telephone line at (318) 226-6788 and that his office had employees at approximately 90 percent of polling precincts. He explained that several reports circulated through social media resulted in unnecessary trips to

investigate. He anticipated fewer delays during the December election because the ballot would be shorter.

Mr. Spence commended student election workers from Loyola's senior civics class and Huntington's law class, noting that his office received positive feedback regarding their service. Mr. Thomas expressed support for expanding student participation and recruiting additional adults to serve as election commissioners.

Mr. Epperson raised concerns regarding the continued availability and suitability of polling locations, including the police academy and Calvary. Administration indicated that it would work with election officials to identify more suitable, permanent locations. It was reported that Calvary had agreed to remain available through the December 12 election while permanent arrangements were pursued for 2027. Mr. Spence discussed plans to establish Huntington High School as a polling location serving approximately eight to ten precincts, citing its available rooms, multiple entrances, and nearby bus stop.

Mr. Kracman thanked Mr. Spence for his responsiveness and asked about problems reported at Blanchard precincts and whether voters had been unable to vote. Mr. Spence stated that he could not guarantee that every voter had remained to cast a ballot, although voters were waiting when he arrived at approximately 9:00 a.m. He indicated that the Town of Blanchard was addressing the matter. In response to a question concerning a possible new election, he stated that the filing period had passed without a challenge being filed.

Mr. Kracman also discussed potential additional early voting locations, including museums in Oil City and at the fairgrounds. Mr. Sibley explained that he had inspected the Oil City museum and determined that its layout, exhibits, and use for presentations would make it unsuitable for voting operations. He identified a building along Highway 1 near a Willis-Knighton facility as a potentially suitable alternative. He had not inspected the fairgrounds museum and noted that previous discussions regarding a western location had focused on the Department of Motor Vehicles facility, where questions remained regarding ownership and available space. Discussion continued regarding possible northern early voting locations, including Oil City and Blanchard.

Mr. Kracman continued the discussion regarding additional early voting locations, asking what steps remained to establish a site in northern Caddo Parish. Mr. Sibley explained that his office had deferred further work until after the current election cycle due to operational changes and staffing demands. He identified recruiting, training, and retaining qualified personnel as the primary challenges, noting that each location needed experienced staff capable of resolving problems independently. He expressed willingness to meet with Administration and resume evaluating additional sites.

Mr. Kracman emphasized the need to improve convenience for residents and reduce congestion at existing polling locations. He asked whether additional early voting sites could operate on alternating days. Mr. Sibley stated that he was reviewing that possibility but emphasized the importance of providing equitable access throughout the parish. He explained that operating a site for fewer days would still require equipment, communications infrastructure, and transportation expenses.

Mr. Sibley also discussed population distribution and projected participation as factors in selecting locations. He stated that he planned to review operations in similarly sized parishes, including Lafayette, St. Tammany, and Calcasieu, to compare staffing and procedures. He noted that proposed electronic poll books could reduce staffing demands, although that equipment was not yet available.

In response to Mr. Cothran's questions regarding voter turnout, Mr. Spence reported that participation was higher than in comparable previous elections, with overall turnout approximately 45 percent and some precincts closer to 35 percent. He discussed voter confusion associated with split precincts and stated that the election involved more than 100 ballot styles. He explained that electronic poll books were expected to help identify the appropriate ballot for each voter.

Mr. Sibley explained that his office assisted election commissioners with registration and precinct assignment questions. He discussed corrections made for affected Blanchard voters and emphasized that municipalities must provide documentation of annexations and other boundary changes so voter records could be updated accurately.

Mrs. Gage-Watts requested clarification regarding provisional ballots and the options available to voters whose registrations had been canceled or designated inactive. Mr. Sibley explained that provisional ballots applied to federal contests and were reviewed by the Parish Board of Election Supervisors to determine whether they could be counted. He stated that voters with canceled registrations would need to register again, while inactive voters could generally update or confirm their information and vote. He encouraged residents to check their registration status through the Secretary of State's website or the GeauxVote app.

Discussion followed regarding equipment and voter assistance concerns at Fair Park. Mr. Spence stated that the precinct had been allocated two machines because of its small number of registered voters and that one machine had malfunctioned. He reported that there was no line when he visited. He also addressed concerns regarding enforcement of the six-minute voting limit, explaining that he advised the commissioner in charge to exercise judgment when no voters were waiting. Regarding a reported request for assistance with constitutional amendments, he stated that the individuals had been seeking advice and that political discussion was prohibited inside the polling place.

Commissioners also discussed access to the downtown early voting location, long lines at Atkins Library, and the possibility of using the State Fair office or another centrally located facility. Mr. Sibley stated that one early voting location was required to be at his office. Concerns included downtown traffic, parking, and accessibility for elderly voters.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Spence and Mr. Sibley for their responsiveness and efforts to maintain voting access during inclement weather. Discussion included the availability of indoor waiting space at polling locations and the need to review lighting conditions, particularly inside voting booths, to assist older voters. The discussion then turned to clarification of the respective responsibilities of the Clerk of Court and Registrar of Voters.

Mr. Sibley clarified that the Registrar of Voters' responsibilities included voter registration, maintenance of voter records, mail ballots, and early voting. Mr. Spence explained that his office administered Election Day operations. Commissioners encouraged both offices to publicize their contact information to help residents obtain reliable information and report concerns directly. Mr. Spence reiterated that the dedicated election telephone number was (318) 226-6788 and that staff began answering calls at 5:00 a.m. on Election Day.

In response to a question regarding problems encountered while voting, Mr. Sibley advised voters to request assistance before pressing the "Cast Vote" button, explaining that a submitted ballot could not be retrieved or changed. He stated that election personnel were available throughout early voting locations to assist voters. He also advised that a Secretary of State investigator was available to investigate allegations of fraud or other election irregularities. He encouraged individuals to report specific, firsthand information through either office. Commissioners thanked Mr. Spence and Mr. Sibley for their presentation and service.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

- Juvenile Detention Center census

Administrator Bryant said that there are 12 children in the Detention Center, three of which is OJJ. There are two 17 year olds. There are 412 children on probation. Twenty-one juveniles are at CCC.

- Approval of DWI Grant

Administrator Bryant announced the Adult Drug Court program had received a DWI grant through the Louisiana Supreme Court. She explained that additional staffing would be needed to separate the drug court and DWI programs.

- Opportunity Zones

Administrator Bryant announced approval of all 10 recommended Opportunity Zone sites. Mr. Walker identified areas along the airport corridor, Kings Highway medical corridor, Old Texas Avenue, the I-20 gateway into downtown, and portions of North Shreveport, including the Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and Audrey Lane area, as well as Oil City, Vivian, and downtown Shreveport. Administration would email Commissioners a map and links identifying the designated areas and work with Louisiana Economic Development to promote investment opportunities.

Mr. Walker explained that a local committee of business and community representatives, led by Parish Administration, evaluated eligible areas and submitted recommendations to the Governor. The Governor subsequently submitted recommendations to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, which approved all 10 local recommendations. Mr. Walker stated that qualifying investments could receive capital gains tax benefits. In response to Mr. Cothran's questions regarding Commission participation, Administration noted that the process had previously been presented to the Commission for input.

- October Financials

Administrator Bryant advised that the October 2026 financials are at each Commissioner's station, as well as, being attached to the agenda.

COMMISSION REMARKS

- Mrs. Blake reported that the Natural Resources Committee received a presentation regarding the Louisiana Well Works initiative and efforts to address abandoned and uncapped wells. She discussed opportunities to connect environmental cleanup with workforce development and announced a community forum at Sci-Port on November 17 at 4:30 p.m. She also noted coordination with local educational institutions and workforce programs. Additional remarks emphasized the initiative's potential to create employment and business opportunities.

- Mr. Cothran reported visiting veterans at two nursing and rehabilitation facilities, distributing approximately 45 recognition letters, and thanking veterans personally for their service. He encouraged continued visits to veterans residing in care facilities and commended Mr. Epperson's work recognizing veterans.

- Mr. Thomas reported that the Appropriations Committee had completed recommendations for inclusion in the proposed 2027 budget. He explained that funding previously allocated to organizations that did not reapply was used to accommodate new applicants.

- Mr. Atkins announced an Audit and Finance Committee meeting on November 17 at 2:00 p.m.

- Mr. Cothran announced a Public Safety Committee meeting on November 19.

- Mr. Burrell announced a Personnel Policies & Procedures Committee meeting on November 19 at 1:00 p.m.

There was no President's Report nor Old Business.

NEW BUSINESS

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas,** seconded by Mr. J. Young, *that the following items be englobo'd and advanced to Thursday's agenda:*

- *Resolution No. 61 of 2026, a resolution of support for the position of the Police Jury Association of Louisiana, Inc. (PJAL), as articulated in its amicus brief, and the position of St. Tammany Parish Government in its litigation concerning unfunded mandates requiring parishes to finance state offices and officers without corresponding provision of a funding source, and otherwise providing with respect thereto*

- *Resolution No. 62 of 2026, a resolution giving written public notice of the regularly scheduled meetings of the Caddo Parish Commission for the calendar year 2027, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

- *Special Resolution Payton "Pops" Houston*

- *Special Resolution Herndon Lady Hawks*

- *Special Resolution Apostle Dr. Rick Layton*

- *Visit from Stacy Brown and Visit Shreveport-Bossier*

- *Introduction of the Year End Appointments (to be adopted December 3)*

Name	***Board***	***Term Expire***
Brad Smith	Fire District No. 1	12/4/2028
Joseph Distefano	Fire District No. 1	12/4/2028
Amy McMullen	Fire District No. 3	12/4/2028
Steve Opdroek	Fire District No. 4	12/4/2028
Greg Sims	Fire District No. 4	12/4/2028
Kevin McClure	Fire District No. 4	12/4/2028
Lennis Elston	Fire District No. 5	12/4/2028
John Lorick	Fire District No. 5	12/4/2028
Stacy Pierce	Fire District No. 5	12/4/2028
Patrick Miciotto	Fire District No. 6	12/4/2028
Marilyn Smith	Fire District No. 6	12/4/2028
Don Razinsky	Fire District No. 6	12/4/2028
David Houston	Fire District No. 7	12/4/2028
James Alexander	Fire District No. 7	12/4/2028
David Austin, Jr.	Fire District No. 8	12/4/2028
Alonzo P. Jackson	Parish Planning & Zoning	10/26/2030
Sgt. Erik Powell	Caddo Animal Services Board	1/1/2030
Catherine Alred	Caddo Animal Services Board	1/1/2031
Dr. Caleb Killian	Caddo Animal Services Board	1/1/2031

Mr. J. Young requested discussion before Thursday's meeting regarding moving Commission meetings from 3:30 p.m. to a later time to improve public access after work.

At this time, Mr. Thomas' motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Jones being absent.

It was **moved by Mr. J. Young,** seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *that Ordinance No. 6680 of 2026, an ordinance to create and establish the Land Bank Authority of the Parish of Caddo, to amend and re-enact Chapter 19 of the Code of Ordinances relative to Housing & Economic Development, to provide for the Administration of the Land Bank including the establishment of a board of directors, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction.

During discussion, Administration confirmed that the proposed budget included allocating half of sports wagering revenues to the housing trust fund for use in connection with the land bank. Administration clarified that Ordinance No. 6680 established the authority without appropriating funds. Administrator Bryant explained that the ordinance would establish the Land Bank Authority pursuant to enabling legislation previously supported by the Commission and sponsored by Senator Jenkins. Additional operational details would be developed with the assistance of a consultant and presented to the Commission.

Administration and Legal explained that the land bank would provide a mechanism to address blighted properties by assembling adjudicated parcels, pursuing court proceedings to quiet titles, and making properties available for sale or redevelopment with marketable titles. Properties could be acquired by developers or individuals, with the goal of allowing purchasers to obtain clear titles and title insurance. Administration stated that properties would ideally remain in the land bank for a minimal period before returning to productive use.

In response to questions regarding funding, Administration explained that the housing trust fund was the anticipated funding source and that a separate legislative action would be required.

Mr. G. Young discussed the initiative's development through the Economic Development Committee and its potential to address blight throughout Caddo Parish. He explained that the effort could include properties within Shreveport and rural communities, including properties involving Parish interests, City interests, or interests held by both entities. He stated that the enabling legislation allowed local governments to develop land banks suited to their individual needs.

At this time, Mr. J. Young's motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Jones being absent.

There were no Communiques & Committee Reports nor Citizens Comments (late arrivals).

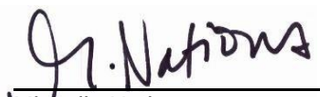
CONSENT AGENDA

- *Ordinance Nos. 6649 – 6677 of 2026, 2027 Operating & Capital Improvements Budgets*

- *Ordinance No. 6678 of 2026, an ordinance amending the 2026 Budget to amend the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Housing Choice Voucher Program Fund and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

- *Ordinance No. 6679 of 206, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for Riverboat Fund and the Oil & Gas Fund to provide an appropriation to Northwest Louisiana Food Bank and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

At this time, there was no further discussion to come before the Commission, so the Commission adjourned at 4:45 p.m.



Michelle Nations
Assistant Commission Clerk