

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S  
PERSONNEL POLICIES & PROCEDURES COMMITTEE  
HELD ON THE 15th DAY OF MARCH, 2021

The Caddo Parish Commission met in a Personnel Policies & Procedures Planning Committee Meeting, on the above date, at 3:00 p.m., via Zoom teleconference, with Mr. Hopkins, Chairperson, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Burrell, Chavez, Hopkins, Jackson, and Johnson (5). ABSENT: None (0).

The invocation was given by Mr. Chavez, and Mr. Burrell led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**AGENDA ADDITIONS**

It was **moved by Mr. Burrell**, seconded by Mr. Chavez, *to expand the agenda and approve consideration of items under La.R.S. 42:17.1. Motion carried by acclamation.*

**CERTIFICATE FOR TELECONFERENCE**

WHEREAS, the Governor of the State of Louisiana has declared a statewide Public Health emergency, inclusive of Caddo Parish, in Proclamation Number 25 JBE 2020; and,

WHEREAS, the Governor, has further extended that declaration via Proclamations Number 158 JBE 2020 and Number 159 JBE 2020; and

WHEREAS, R.S. 42:17.1 allows members of political subdivisions to participate in its meetings electronically under certain limited circumstances.

THEREFORE, in accordance with the Provisions of R.S. 42:17.1, the presiding officer of the Caddo Parish Commission hereby certifies that this meeting is to address matters that are:

- (a) directly related to the public Commission's response to the Coronavirus Pandemic and are critical to the health, safety, or welfare of the public.
- (b) that if they are delayed will cause curtailment of vital public services or severe economic dislocation and hardship.
- (c) critical to continuation of the business of the Commission and that are not able to be postponed to a meeting held in accordance with the other provisions of Open Meetings Law due to a legal requirement or other deadline that cannot be postponed or delayed by the public body.
- (d) critical or time-sensitive and have been determined by the undersigned should not be delayed;\*  
*consideration of matters under Paragraph (d) will initially require a two-thirds vote of those members present).*

**DATE: March 12, 2021**

  
Todd Hopkins, Chair

The Chair opened the floor for public comments. At this time, there were no one to speak, so the Chair closed Public Comments.

**NEW BUSINESS**

The Chair moved onto the first New Business item:

- *Discuss Resolution No. 26 of 2021, a resolution amending the Rules & By-Laws of the Caddo Parish Commission regarding time limits of speakers under Communiqués & Committee Reports and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

Mr. Johnson said that the intent of Resolution No. 26 is to limit the Commissioners to 5 minutes under Communiqués & Committee Reports. He also pointed out that the Commissioners are limited to 5 minutes for discussion on a question.

Mr. Burrell wanted to know if this has been done under any other administration. Mr. Hopkins explained that the By-Laws have been in place since 1984. There have always been restrictions

on public comments and other restrictions. He also said that a gentleman's agreement has been in place to allow 7 minutes for Commissioners under Communiques.

Mr. Burrell understands the limits on public comments due the large number of citizens that speak on certain topics. Mr. Hopkins also pointed out that public hearings are limited to 15 minutes per side.

Mr. Burrell said that it was his understanding that Communiques were for Commissioners to have an opportunity to give information to the public and their constituents. He suggested that the President ask the Commissioners to respectively wrap it up if they become too long winded about items.

Mr. Jackson wanted to know if time limits would be applied to the Administration Report, President's Report, and Visitors. Mr. Johnson said that that it would not apply to all of those. Visitors are typically told to keep their presentations between 10-15 minutes. The Administration Report has numerous items listed on it, by the request of Commissioners, so his update may take longer than 5 minutes. The President's Report could take longer than 5 minutes if they have to update the Commissioners on happenings in the Parish.

Mr. Jackson is concerned that the Commissioners are being limited on their time to speak when they may have something important to say for their constituents, such as crime, COVID, etc. He also explained that the intent of the first Communiques section on the agenda is for items related to the agenda, and the second section has a little more leeway. He suggested putting up a running clock on Zoom to show the Commissioner how long they have spoken.

Mr. Chavez agreed and suggested the Parliamentarian enforce the time limits on Commissioners. He also said that it is taking a long time to get to the meat of the agenda.

Mr. Burrell wanted to know if there were two sections of Communiques on the agendas. Mr. Hopkins explained that there are. The first section is for items related to the agenda, and the second is for Commissioners to make announcements and provide updates on items.

Mr. Burrell then wanted to know if there was a time limit on either of the Communiques sections. Mr. Hopkins explained that there is a gentleman's agreement of 7 minutes on both sections, but there is nothing in the By-Laws regarding time limits for Commissioners on Communiques. Mr. Burrell reiterated that the President or Vice-President should inform the Commissioner if their report is becoming too length.

It was **moved by Mr. Hopkins**, seconded by Mr. Johnson, *to recommend to the full body approval of Resolution No. 26 of 2021, a resolution amending the Rules & By-Laws of the Caddo Parish Commission regarding time limits of speakers under Communiques & Committee Reports and to otherwise provide with respect thereto.*

Mr. Hopkins believes that five minutes should suffice for items related on the agenda and communiques. He also mentioned that questions to and from department heads should not count against that time.

Mr. Johnson said that he would like to be in the By-Laws so there is a record of the rule. He also said that if a Commissioner needs more time to speak, they could always ask for an extension. Mr. Johnson also said that they will start enforcing the first round of communiques being items related to the agenda. He asked that the Commission Clerk's Office put a note under Communiques explaining this.

**Amendment by Mr. Jackson**, seconded by Mr. Hopkins, *to amend the resolution for a seven minute time limit for Commissioners under Communiques with an option for a three minute extension by approval of the full body.*

Mr. Jackson feels that this is a balanced compromise. He would still like to see this applied to all areas of the agenda.

At this time, Mr. Jackson's amended motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Burrell, Chavez, Hopkins, and Jackson (4). NAYS: Commissioner Johnson (1). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

- *Discuss Resolution No. 27 of 2021, a resolution amending the Rules & By-Laws of the Caddo Parish Commission regarding the re-submission of agenda items by Commissioners, and otherwise providing with respect thereto*

Mr. Hopkins said that Mr. Lazarus is the author of this legislation. He said that his intent is that items that have failed has been brought back to the Commission on numerous occasions.

Mr. Burrell does not feel there should be a restriction placed on an elected official from bringing an item to the full body. He said that if another person disagrees, they could vote it up or down. That's the democratic process, he said.

Mr. Jackson cautioned changing the fundamental structure of this body and institution. He said that he is hesitant when the Commission starts adding restrictions to the By-Laws. He feels that restricting how many times items can be added to the agenda is a dangerous precedent.

Mr. Chavez suggested to maybe restrict failed items for one month, instead of six months. He also suggested that maybe the sitting president move the item to its respective committee rather than it failing. Mr. Chavez said that he understands passion, but maybe some protocols be put in place to not congest the agenda with duplicate items.

It was **moved by Mr. Hopkins**, seconded by Mr. Jackson, *to recommend approval to the full body Resolution No. 27 of 2021, a resolution amending the Rules & By-Laws of the Caddo Parish Commission regarding the re-submission of agenda items by Commissioners, and otherwise providing with respect thereto.*

Mr. Burrell reiterated the democratic process and the Commissioners' right to vote an item up or down.

Mr. Jackson wanted to know if this would restrict all resolutions and ordinances from being brought back up if it failed. Attorney Frazier explained that if the resolution has the same subject matter or would result in the same outcome, it could not be brought back up by any of the Commissioners for six months.

Mr. Burrell wanted to know if any other body has done this. Attorney Frazier said that she has not conducted any research regarding this. It would take researching the different bodies' by-laws because this is not covered by Robert's Rules of Order.

Mr. Jackson wanted to know if this would apply to ordinances that are remanded to committee. Mr. Hopkins explained that it would not because it has not been defeated. Attorney Frazier pointed out that this would only apply to resolutions.

At this time, Mr. Hopkins' motion failed, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: None (0). NAYS: Commissioners Burrell, Chavez, Hopkins, Jackson, and Johnson (5). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

- *Discuss holding in-person Caddo Parish Commission meetings (Work Sessions, Regular Session, and Committee meetings)*

Mr. Jackson wanted to have a discussion regarding when the Commission would go back into the Chambers. He suggested possibly 95%-96% of the body and staff being vaccinated prior to meeting back in the Chambers.

Mr. Burrell said that he has mixed feelings about this issue. He watches and follows the CDC guidelines closely and understands that this virus changes and mutates constantly. Mr. Burrell also said that CDC still recommends to only be around your family and cautions being around people you don't know, even if you are vaccinated. His concern is with some of the public who are against the vaccine.

Attorney Frazier said that the Commission cannot require employees to be vaccinated as a required condition of employment. Also, the Parish cannot disclose whether or not an employee has received the vaccine pursuant to HIPAA.

Mr. Hopkins said that he hasn't taken any polls or anything, but he feels that the Commission and staff is about 90% vaccinated. He wanted to know the percentage of Commissioners and staff to be vaccinated before meetings are held in the Chambers.

Mr. Jackson said that the employees could volunteer to disclose whether or not they got their shot, and that would be done with HR in accordance with confidentiality and HIPAA agreements. He suggested 96% vaccination rate prior to meeting back into the Chambers. He also pointed out that just because you consent to disclose that you have received your shot, it does not mean the public has access to your records or medical history.

Mr. Chavez wanted to know if the Commission was the only body who was still meeting on Zoom. Mr. Hopkins said that he is not 100% sure, but asked that Administration provide that information to the Committee.

Mr. Chavez said that vaccines aside, what is the Commission waiting on to meet in the Chambers. He asked that the president conduct a query of the Commissioners to see what the reservations are.

Mr. Burrell pointed out that whether the Commission is meeting via Zoom or in the Chambers, work is being done.

Mr. Hopkins said that this discussion will be brought back to the next committee meeting.

- *Discus updates to current By-Laws*

Mr. Hopkins asked the Committee members to review Articles I-VI for any changes and revisions that needs to be made. He will schedule another meeting in April and add this to the agenda.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned.

  
Assistant Commission Clerk