

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
OF THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION
HELD ON THE 16TH DAY OF MAY, 2022

The Caddo Parish Commission met in a Work Session, on the above date, at 3:30 p.m., in the Government Chambers, with Mr. Atkins, presiding, and the following members in attendance constituting a quorum: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Chavez, Epperson, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (11). ABSENT: Commissioner Gage-Watts (1).

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

AGENDA ADDITIONS

It was **moved by Mr. Epperson**, seconded by Mr. Johnson, *that the agenda be expanded and Resolution No. 32 of 2022, a resolution to call upon the federal government to urgently address the student loan crisis and enact a plan to cancel student loan debt and begin the transition to education as a public good, and otherwise providing with respect thereto* be added under New Business.

The President of the Commission opened the floor for anyone to speak in favor or against the agenda addition. There being no one to speak for or against the agenda addition, the President closed the public hearing.

At this time, Mr. Epperson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Chavez, Epperson, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (10). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioners Gage-Watts and Jones (2). ABSTAIN: None (0).

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

- NACo Achievement Awards

Dr. Wilson said that the Parish received a NACo Achievement Award for the ERAP program, and two NACo Achievement Awards for the Parks & Recreation Department.

- Juvenile Detention

There are currently twenty-six children in the detention center; five of which are OJJ and five are runaways from other parishes. Of those children, nine are 17 year olds. Dr. Wilson also said that there are ten children currently being held at CCC.

- April, 2022 Financial Report

Dr. Wilson provided the Commissioners with a copy of the April 2022 Financial Reports. The reports were also attached to the agenda.

COMMISSION REMARKS

- Mr. Young asked for an update on the Confederate Monument. Dr. Wilson said that contractor is making arrangements to begin his work, but there has been some issues with the supply chain.

Mr. Young requested that Ms. Krystle Beauchamp provide the work that she has done on the Relocate to Caddo project to the Commissioners.

- Mr. Johnson pointed out that monitor is still not working. The Clerk of the Commission stated that he will reach out to the City for a solution.

- Mr. Epperson asked for an update on the Selber Building. Dr. Wilson said that the building is not being used at this time. He also stated that the Parish does not own the building.

Mr. Epperson then asked about the Relocate to Caddo campaign. Dr. Wilson explained that they are currently working on the campaign in collaboration with the Chamber, City of Shreveport, and Tourism Bureau. Mr. Epperson wanted to know how much has been allocated for this campaign. Dr. Wilson said that \$100,000 has been allocated for the Parish's efforts.

- Mr. Burrell talked about the mass shooting in Buffalo, New York. He wanted to know if there were any public discourse regarding the removal of the Confederate Monument. Dr. Wilson said that they have not receive any, but the contractor and other officials have received threats. He said that they are trying to proceed with caution.

NEW BUSINESS

It was **moved by Mr. Epperson**, seconded by Mr. Young, *that Ordinance No. 6230 of 2022, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Riverboat Fund and the Oil & Gas Fund in the amount of \$6,500 to provide an appropriation for Wildlife Education & Rehabilitation of Louisiana and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction. Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Chavez, Epperson, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (11). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Gage-Watts (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Jackson**, seconded by Mr. Atkins, *to englobo and move the following items to Thursday's agenda for introduction:*

- *Ordinance No. 6231 of 2022, an ordinance setting the Parish millage for the purpose of paying principal and interest, due in 2022 on outstanding Parish bond issues and to instruct the Assessor to include said millage on the tax roll of the Parish of Caddo for the year 2022, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6232 of 2022, an ordinance to set the General Purpose and Special Purpose Millages providing for millage rate adjustments, as allowed by Article VII, Section 23 of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974 and LA R.S. 47:1705 (b), levying and imposing taxes and assessments for 2022 on all the property subject to taxation in the parish of caddo, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6233 of 2022, an ordinance to adopt the values fixed, or to be fixed by the Louisiana Tax Commission on all assessments for railways and other public service corporations, and to instruct the Assessor to extend such assessments and values on the tax roll of the Parish of Caddo for the year 2022, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6234 of 2022, an ordinance setting the assessment of property classified as timberlands and to instruct the Assessor to include said assessment on the tax roll of the Parish of Caddo for the year 2022, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

At this time, Mr. Jackson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Chavez, Epperson, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (11). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Gage-Watts (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Johnson**, seconded by Mr. Lazarus, *that Ordinance No. 6235 of 2022, 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 moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction.

Mr. Jackson asked that the exhibits be provided prior to the final vote on this ordinance.

At this time, Mr. Johnson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Chavez, Epperson, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (11). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Gage-Watts (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Johnson**, seconded by Mr. Jackson, *that Ordinance No. 6236 of 2022, an ordinance requiring that all Parish employees hired, appointed or promoted to Parish Attorney, Assistant Parish Administrator, Parish Administrator/CEO, Department Director or Commission Clerk, must be residents of caddo parish, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction.

Mr. Johnson explained that this cleans up the language on the intent of what was voted on with regards to grandfathering clause.

At this time, Mr. Johnson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Chavez, Epperson, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (11). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Gage-Watts (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Jackson**, seconded by Mr. Chavez, *that Ordinance No. 6237 of 2022, An ordinance regarding an exchange of roadways with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development in connection with extending LA 3276 to LA 1, to authorize the exchange of certain portions of Parish roads in return for certain portions of state highways; to authorize the Parish Administrator to execute agreements as necessary to accomplish that exchange, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be remanded to the Long Range Planning Committee.

Mr. Jackson said that he has questions regarding this ordinance, but would like LADOTD to be a part of the conversation.

Mr. Atkins asked for clarification regarding this ordinance. Dr. Wilson said that the State is requesting this. He explained that the highway from I-49 to the Port is to preserve for the I-69 Corridor. Dr. Wilson said that this is a zero sum game for the Parish, as well as for the State. Mr. Atkins asked if the citizens would be affected. Dr. Wilson said that there will be some land acquisitions along the path, but does not see any adverse impacts to the citizens.

Mr. Tim Weaver, Public Works, said that the Commission appropriated \$2.25M towards this project.

Mr. Chavez wanted to know if there was a time constraint on this ordinance. Mr. Weaver said that they would like to get this done as soon as possible, so they can start the surveying of the project.

Dr. Wilson pointed out that this is a complex project because they had to get every legislator in this delegation to approve it.

Mrs. Bryant mentioned that there is a resolution on the agenda that the Port needs for a grant to get additional funding. That resolution is stating that the Commission would consider this project by ordinance.

Mr. Jackson said that his motion is to postpone the ordinance, not the resolution.

Mr. Chavez suggested that this ordinance be moved forward, but also remanded to the Long Range Planning Committee. Mr. Hopkins said that the resolution is separate of the ordinance.

At this time, Mr. Jackson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Chavez, Epperson, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Taliaferro, and Young (10). NAYS: Commissioner Lazarus (1). ABSENT: Commissioner Gage-Watts (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Johnson**, seconded by Mr. Epperson, *that Ordinance No. 6238 of 2022, an ordinance adopting Section 32-62 of the Code of Ordinances prohibiting possession or carriage in a motor vehicle on public roads of firearms with a magazine capable of holding more than 20 rounds of ammunition, to provide for penalties for violation of the ordinance, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction.

Mr. Johnson said that he placed this item on the agenda due to the increase in drive-by shootings. He also explained that the ordinance says that if there is a gun in a motor vehicle, the magazine has to be disengaged from the gun if it has more than twenty rounds in it. Mr. Johnson also understands that people like to go to the gun range or go hunting and carry these types of weapons. He explained that in either of those situations, the gun does not need to be loaded in the vehicle.

Mr. Chavez asked for clarification on this ordinance. Attorney Frazier said that the intent of the ordinance is that a person would not be able to have a gun on public roads that has the twenty rounds capacity loaded. She said that the person could have the gun, but the ammunition would need to be separate while in your vehicle.

Mr. Taliaferro said that this ordinance is limiting the magazine capacity for every firearm that a person is carrying on a parish roadway. Attorney Frazier disagreed and said that those guns can be carried, but the firearms that have over a twenty round capacity cannot be loaded on a parish roadway. Mr. Taliaferro said that loading his weapon would hinder his opportunity to protect himself. An unloaded weapon for my personal protection does me no good, he said.

Mr. Jackson wanted to know if this was in response to the recent gun violence in the community. Mr. Johnson said that this has been a constant plea on his end. Mr. Jackson said that this ordinance does not limit a person's ability to carry a weapon, nor does it limit a person's right to carry a weapon. He said that this ordinance only says that it cannot be loaded if it has a magazine capacity of twenty rounds.

Mr. Johnson said that a person should not have a gun with over twenty rounds loaded in their vehicle while on a public road. He also explained that a person can have the weapon and the ammunition in their vehicles, but it just can't be loaded on a public road. He said that personal protection weapons in vehicles do not typically carry more than twenty rounds. Mr. Johnson said that this ordinance is to give law enforcement some teeth and be more proactive to the recent violence in the community.

Mr. Jones said that he is a gun owner and believes in the Second Amendment right. He said that this ordinance does not stop a person from owning a gun or carrying a gun. He also pointed out that law enforcement officers do not carry more than twenty rounds on their person, so why would a citizen need to? Mr. Jones also mentioned that he frequents the gun range, but does not load until he gets there because it is not necessary.

Mr. Young said that it was mentioned to him that all forms of gun regulation is reserved for the State Legislature to decide. Attorney Frazier said that local governments cannot pass anything that is more restrictive than state law, but she has not had the opportunity to look at all of the variances with the carrier provisions. Attorney Frazier also said that a person can open carry, but the gun has to be

unloaded; when a person conceal carries is when the gun can be loaded or unloaded. She also said that they need to do more research regarding this matter. Mr. Young asked for a memo on this prior to the final vote.

Mr. Chavez wanted to know if this would apply inside municipalities or only in the unincorporated areas of the Parish. Attorney Frazier said that it would only apply to the unincorporated areas of the Parish. Mr. Johnson pointed out that he is working with the City Council to adopt legislation mirroring this ordinance.

At this time, Mr. Johnson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Atkins, Burrell, Epperson, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, and Young (7). NAYS: Commissioners Chavez, Hopkins, Lazarus, and Taliaferro (4). ABSENT: Commissioner Gage-Watts (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Johnson**, seconded by Mr. Chavez, *to englobo and move the following items to Thursday's Regular Session for consideration:*

- *Resolution No. 31 of 2022, a resolution regarding a joint project with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, for extension of LA 3276 to LA 1, to commit the Parish to fulfillment of certain obligations regarding transfer of parish roads and state highways in connection with that joint project, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Resolution No. 32 of 2022, a resolution to call upon the federal government to urgently address the student loan crisis and enact a plan to cancel student loan debt and begin the transition to education as a public good, and otherwise providing with respect thereto*
- *Special Resolution Proclaiming May as Pediatric Stroke Awareness Month*
- *Special Resolution Proclaiming May 22nd as National Maritime Day*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition & Appreciation for William Samuel Davis*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition & Appreciation for Martha Carter on her retirement*

Substitute motion by Mr. Atkins, seconded by Mr. Young, *to remove Resolution No. 32 of 2022 from the englobo.*

Substitute motion by Mr. Jackson *to remove Resolution No. 31 of 2022 from the englobo.*

At this time, Mr. Johnson removed his original motion.

It was **moved by Mr. Chavez**, seconded by Mr. Atkins, *that Resolution No. 31 of 2022, a resolution regarding a joint project with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, for extension of LA 3276 to LA 1, to commit the Parish to fulfillment of certain obligations regarding transfer of parish roads and state highways in connection with that joint project, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration. Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Chavez, Epperson, Hopkins, Johnson, Jones, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (10). NAYS: Commissioner Jackson (1). ABSENT: Commissioner Gage-Watts (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Young**, seconded by Mr. Chavez, *to englobo and move the following items to Thursday's Regular Session for consideration:*

- *Special Resolution Proclaiming May as Pediatric Stroke Awareness Month*
- *Special Resolution Proclaiming May 22nd as National Maritime Day*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition & Appreciation for William Samuel Davis*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition & Appreciation for Martha Carter on her retirement*

At this time, Mr. Young's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Chavez, Epperson, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (11). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Gage-Watts (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Epperson**, seconded by Mr. Jackson, *Resolution No. 32 of 2022, a resolution to call upon the federal government to urgently address the student loan crisis and enact a plan to cancel student loan debt and begin the transition to education as a public good, and otherwise providing with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration.

Mr. Epperson explained that student loan debt in America is approximately \$1.6T and growing. He said that it has been a burden on the educational system since 2005. Mr. Epperson also said that there are several European countries that has higher education at no cost. About 40% of the students do not even attain their degrees or certificates, but are still burdened with the student loan debt. Upon completing college, students start out with an average debt of \$20,000. Mr. Epperson also said that the United States just ended a 20-year war with a cost of about \$350M per day. The United States has also granted monies to Ukraine. There was also a tax break to profit the 1% of America's wealthiest persons. Mr. Epperson said that these are ways that this can be used to pay for this debt.

Mr. Chavez said that the recruiters for the military use tuition exemption as a means to boost the military. He fears what would happen to the recruitment numbers if tuition exemptions are no longer. Mr. Burrell said that he never thought about that, but does not see this as an incentive of sending people to war.

Mr. Chavez said that not everyone needs college and there should be more focus on trade schools, such as welding, HVAC, etc. He joined the military after dropping out of high school, then left the military and used the knowledge he gained to start his own business. He also mentioned that there are several people who are in the military and never see war.

Mr. Hopkins wanted to know which degrees this would cover. Mr. Epperson said that this would cover all degrees and certificates.

Mr. Epperson said that he was in the military, but it was not because of a free higher education. He said that he did use his GI bill after he got out of the military. Mr. Epperson pointed out that the military does not just take anyone, and people are lining up to receive a free education.

Mr. Young said that this resolution is urging and requesting another governmental body to do something, which he is very cautious about. He asked that there be more preference to Caddo Parish and its citizens.

Mr. Taliaferro pointed out that education is a commodity and is part of debt that a person is willing to assume to get something of greater value over a longer period of time. He said that there are a variety of programs which help make education more affordable.

Mr. Johnson said that this resolution is asking the federal government to forgive student loans. He said that the impact of student loans today hinders people from starting a family, buying a car, buying a house, etc. People need to make more money to be able to afford those basic amenities in life, so they move to other places, such as Dallas, Atlanta, etc. for higher paying jobs to pay off the loans and live a decent life.

Mr. Jackson said that Ruston offered people \$10,000 to move back there. He said that student loan forgiveness has a ripple effect in the economy by freeing up debt so a person can buy a house, start a business, etc.

At this time, Mr. Epperson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes:
AYES: Commissioners Burrell, Chavez, Epperson, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Taliaferro, and Young (8).
NAYS: Commissioners Atkins, Hopkins, and Lazarus (3). ABSENT: Commissioner Gage-Watts (1).
ABSTAIN: None (0).

COMMUNIQUES AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Mr. Johnson asked for an update on the Welcome Signs. Mr. Lawrence said that they are breaking ground by the end of the month, and should be completed by the first of July.

Mr. Johnson requested that a representative from Origin Bank come before the Commission and give an update on their community involvement.

- Mr. Epperson asked about the fiscal agent. Mrs. Bryant said that the fiscal agent Caddo is currently using is Origin Bank. Mr. Epperson wanted to know when would be the next time the Commission would vote on it. Mrs. Bryant said that she will research it further.

Mr. Epperson also wanted to know about Relocate Caddo campaign. He suggested that more signage be a part of the advertising campaign. Dr. Wilson acknowledged Mr. Epperson's suggestion and said that there is still work to be done. He also pointed out that the advertising does not need to be in Caddo Parish, but in other places, such as Texas.

- Mr. Jackson asked for an update on the projects and initiatives that were approved for ARP funding. Mrs. Bryant said that they have consultants who are looking at the projects. She also pointed out that they have not received the second tranche of funding from the federal government just yet. Mr. Jackson wanted to know if CEAs could be signed. Mrs. Bryant said that they cannot sign the CEAs if they do not know if the project is eligible or not. She also pointed out that if the projects were not chosen in a correct manner, then there could be issues.

Mr. Jackson would also like an update from the fiscal agent with regards to CDFIs.

CITIZENS COMMENTS (Late Arrivals)

Ms. Veronica Wright came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

Well, I want to speak on behalf of this juvenile system that you all got in place that's totally ridiculous Okay. Bond is set too high for juveniles. Reason why, I don't know. If you have leg monitors in place or if they're at home with their parents, I don't see why they couldn't, you know, come home on a O.R., or you know. It's just the bond is just ridiculous too high for juveniles. And another thing is I don't understand why juveniles are being sent to CCC at a juvenile age in the population with adults. You're thinking your child's going there to be safe. No, it's not safe. My son been attacked twice by two inmates and the guard. You know, so everything's been swept under the rug, kept quiet. But for me, as a parent, lay eyes on my child and he's bruised up and supposed to be protected. It's not good. And then another thing, you want to arrest parents for their children not being in school, or you being them, but it's happening in the system. You know, my son has been educated for a whole year. He's just been sitting there all year. You know why? Bonds too high. Me, as a single parent can't bail him out and I think that really needs to be addressed, you know, all the way around the board. I just want my child released to me, you know, leg monitor, whatever. And then, if the child being sent to CCC, they should have privilege to visit every day or, you know, give it two visitor days. They don't have that. You know, I have to visit my child once a week. You know, and the adults get to visit maybe two, three times a week. My son couldn't even get counseled by his pastor. Everything is like shut down. It's like nothing. But for my child to be fearing for his life when you're supposed to be protected at a adult facility and it's not. I think it's no good. I don't think they should be get to go to CCC until at least turn 18, because they are not being protected. There's inmates dealing and wheeling with the juveniles and they're wrong. I don't understand that. You know, come off into sales, being mistreated by the guards is no good. I don't think children should be in CCC with adults. So, I just wanted to address the juvenile system thing. It needs to be relooked at; and if y'all are going to keep kids in CCC, then at least you have the phone visit where you could go actually see them instead of on a monitor. You know, we still talking about juveniles, but and they should be protected more than they are and they should be educated. My son has no-he been in there a year and, what, two months? Haven't been educated, period. Not having been charged or anything. It's just the bond to have for me to receive my child. So, I think y'all should look into jail reform for Louisiana. They got in the other cities in Louisiana, but they don't have it here in Shreveport. I've been researching all that, all avenues, trying to get help and get my child home, at least so he can be educated. If he's not charged, or not proven guilty. I don't think juveniles should have bond that high. Thank you.

CONSENT AGENDA

- *Ordinance No. 6224 of 2022, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues and Expenditures for the Riverboat Fund in the amount of \$6,000 to provide an appropriation for the Greater Shreveport Chamber Foundation and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6229 of 2022, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues and Expenditures for the Capital Outlay Fund and the Oil and Gas Fund for the year 2022 to provide an appropriation for the construction of the YMCA Baseball Complex 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 5:05 p.m.


Assistant Commission Clerk