

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S  
PANDEMIC & NATURAL DISASTER AD HOC COMMITTEE  
HELD ON THE 11TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2021

The Caddo Parish Commission met in a Pandemic & Natural Disaster Ad Hoc Committee Meeting, on the above date, at 3:00 p.m., via Zoom teleconference, with Mr. Jackson, Chairperson, presiding, and the following members in attendance constituting a quorum: Commissioners Epperson, Jackson, and Johnson (3). ABSENT: Commissioners Gage-Watts and Young (2).

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

**AGENDA ADDITIONS**

It was **moved by Mr. Jackson** to expand the agenda and approve consideration of items under La.R.S. 42:17.1. Motion carried unanimously.

**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: February 9, 2021**

  
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Steven Jackson, Chair

## **CITIZENS COMMENTS**

John Settle submitted the following citizen comment:

I understand that many African Americans in Shreveport have expressed a reluctance to be vaccinated for COVID-19. I also understand that many citizens in Caddo Parish are homebound and have difficulty in obtaining the vaccinations. Shreveport Council member Tabitha Taylor and Dr. Tonya Clayton are working to establish a homebound vaccination program. I think its important to educate ALL citizens on the SCIENCE vs the Scuttlebutt on these vaccinations. FOCUS SB is ready to provide maximum publicity to assist the COVID-19 vaccinations programs as part of its mission to build a better community with positive local news. Please advise when and how we can help.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Committee and said the following items will be discussed:

- *Public Health Update*
- *Community Vaccination Planning*
- *Outreach to African-American Communities*
- *Caddo Homeland Security Updates*
- *Implementation of COVID-19 Threat Assessment Level in Accordance with Resolution No. 56 of 2020*
- *Update on FEMA Reimbursement Pursuant to Presidential Memorandum*
- *Update on US Treasury Rental Assistance in Accordance with Resolution No. 9 of 2021*
- *Discussion Regarding MPC/ZBA Teleconference Meetings*

Mr. Jackson reminded everyone that we are still in the middle of a pandemic. He would like to use this committee to a forum and tool to provide accurate information to the public. At this time, Mr. Jackson introduced Dr. Martha Whyte to the committee.

Dr. Whyte said that Caddo Parish is looking better, but “we are still not good”. She reminded everyone to keep doing the mitigation efforts, i.e. social distancing, wearing masks, washing hands, etc., so that the numbers will continue to decrease. Caddo Parish’s percent positivity is below 10%, which is the lowest it has been in a while.

She encouraged everyone to get tested to know their status, even if they are not having symptoms. Dr. Whyte also mentioned that a person should not be charged to be tested or receive a vaccine. If someone is charged, then they are to let Dr. Whyte’s office know.

She then talked about vaccines. When they first started vaccinations, they had Pfizer. Those types of vaccines required specific storage requirements. There were some regions in this state that didn’t receive as much of the vaccine as other parishes due to not having large hospitals. During the past couple of weeks, the supply has been limited in the areas with large hospital systems in an effort to ensure those other regions receive their fair share of the vaccine. Dr. Whyte then offered her email

address to the committee members in the chatroom to discuss any issues or concerns with people not being able to receive the vaccine.

Mr. Jackson then introduced Mr. Willie C. White, III to discuss community vaccination planning. Mr. White said that David Raines Community Health Center are apart of an effort to get the vaccines out to the community. In addition to Caddo Parish, they also service Bossier, Webster, and Claiborne parishes. Currently, they've administered approximately 3,200 vaccines are in the process of delivering the second shots to those individuals. As a primary care provider and community health center, they've had to alter their operations to be able to effectively and efficiently deliver the vaccines. They have implemented vaccine only days. They are also planning drive-thru vaccination events throughout Shreveport and Bossier. There are also efforts planned for testing sites in north Caddo Parish. Mr. White thanked those for their continued support. David Raines has been a part of this community for many years and serve a large portion of the underserved communities as a community health center. They are encouraging everyone to get tested and receive their vaccinations.

Mr. White then said that there has been some resistance, particularly in the African-American community, to get the vaccine. They are hoping to close that gap.

Dr. Wilson asked for the process to set up an appointment. Mr. White said that there is an appointment line that the citizens can call: 318-227-3354. He also said that there is a waiting list because they are not sure of when they will receive the next round of first doses. They are encouraging everyone to go to the website and pre-register for the appointment by clicking on the COVID-19 tab.

Mr. Jackson asked about the utilization of FQHCs. Mr. White explained that the new administration just recently announced that their plan is to ship vaccines directly to community health center around the country, but they are unsure of which community health center will be first to receive those vaccines. He also said that their vaccines are coming through the State. Mr. Jackson offered help with any of the events. Mr. White thanked Mr. Jackson and Director Jump for his assistance and communication through this process.

Mr. Jackson asked that this information be linked to the Caddo Parish website. He then introduced Sheriff Prator and Director Jump for any general Caddo Homeland Security update, as well as, discussion regarding the implementation of threat levels.

Director Jump said that they are currently trying to keep everyone in the loop regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. He also talked about the upcoming inclement weather. He said that they are anticipating two to six inches of snow, sleet, and light icing for the next several days.

Mr. Cawthorne wanted to know if there are any safety or precautionary measures that need to be made public to the citizens. Director Jump said that the information that they receive will be put forth to the citizens.

He also talked about the Homeland Security grant structure. As they move into the Spring, the federal government will release the amount of money that they give to the states and local jurisdictions to support Homeland Security operations. Traditionally, Caddo Parish receives about \$121,000.

Mr. Jackson talked about Resolution No. 56 of 2020 regarding the threat level assessment for COVID-19. He asked for the status of it and when will it be implemented. Mr. Johnson explained that the resolution was adopted and a meeting was held. During that meeting, there was concerns about being consistence with what the Governor was doing. Mr. Johnson revised the resolution based on the conversation that was had during the committee meeting. He asked that the Clerk of the Commission provide a copy to the Commissioners and staff.

Mr. Jackson also asked for an update regarding the FEMA and CARES Act reimbursements. Director Jump explained that the President signed a memorandum awarding the State of Louisiana a 100% cost reimbursement for Category B, Emergency Protective Measures. According to FEMA, the definition of emergency protective measures are those actions taken by community before, during, and following a disaster to save lives, protect public health and safety, or eliminate immediate threats of significant damage to improved public and private properties about cost effective measures. He said that he would like to meet with representatives with the Parish, the City, and municipalities about what damages occurred. Once he has an idea of how much damage is out there, he will reach out to the State and request a preliminary damage assessment. The Governor's Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness will assign someone who will physically come to the area. They'll then get in touch with Director Jump's office and assess the damages to see what qualifies and what doesn't. Dr. Wilson said that Dr. Ward will look at the list and see what can be reimbursed under this program.

The Committee then moved onto the next New Business item, *Update on U.S. Treasury Rental Assistance in Accordance with Resolution No. 9 of 2021*. Dr. Wilson said that they sent out twelve requests for qualifications in regards to the Emergency Rental Assistance Program. The purpose of the RFP was to determine the level of resources available to develop and implement the program. They received seven of the twelve requests that were sent out and are currently reviewing them. They determined that the most expedient and efficient way to fully implement the program is to use an administrator to manage the overall program while using community partners to receive and process the applications. The community partners will be compensated for their assistance through an agreed upon compensation method. The quickest method to get the program up and running is to use an administrator who already has the resources and staff to implement the program. A reliable, accurate, and easy-to-use rental system software is a key component to the successful implementation of this program. An online portal is also necessary for the success of the program. The administrator will be allowed to use the online portal process to collect data and provide the necessary reporting.

The administrator of the program will have the following responsibilities: develop the guidelines for the program requirements, including documentation design and application; create an online application portal; create an application in multiple languages; provide a call center and customer support service to assist applicants with questions that provide bilingual support personnel; training community partner to collect data through the online system; and establish a quality control process to identify deficiencies and inconsistencies. It is their goal to have the program up and running by March.

Mr. Jackson wanted to know the reason for establishing a call center if 211 is already in place. Dr. Wilson said that the Administrator for the program will determine that.

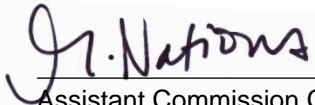
Mr. Jackson also wanted to know if the Administrator for the program will be selecting the organization. Dr. Wilson stated that the Parish will be selecting the community partners. Mrs. Barnett said that the organizations who responded to the RFQs were United Way, Providence House, Northwest CDC, Grace Project, Catholic Charities, Postlewaitte & Netteville, Housing Authority of the City of Shreveport. The ones who did not respond were Goodwill Industries, CCAA, Morning Star Baptist Church, and CSRS.

Mr. Jackson said that he did not know that Postlwaite & Netteville did rental assistance. Mrs. Barnett said that they reached out to the Commission because they worked with the State for the Main Street Recovery program. He then asked about CSRS. Mrs. Barnett said that they are a company based out of Texas. She also said that if a company reached out to the Commission, a letter was sent to them.

Mr. Jackson then wanted to know if the state portion and the direct assistance were going to be separated. Dr. Wilson said that they are still thinking about that approach, but they did talk about tracking them separately in the accounting process. Mrs. Barnett said that they will receive a total of about \$15M for rental assistance.

The Committee then moved onto the next New Business item, *Discussion regarding the MPC/ZBA teleconference meetings*. Mr. Epperson said that the MPC had a virtual meeting on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, and it went well.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Nations". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

Assistant Commission Clerk