

CADDO PARISH COMMISSION  
505 TRAVIS STREET, GOVERNMENT PLAZA PUBLIC NOTICE  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA  
March 14, 2022  
11:00 am

The Caddo Parish Animal Services Committee met in legal session on the above date, at 11:00 a.m., in the Government Plaza Chambers, with Mr. Chavez, Chairman, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Atkins, Chavez, Lazarus, and Young (4). ABSENT: Commissioners Gage-Watts, Jackson, and Johnson (3).

Mr. Young gave the invocation, and Mr. Lazarus led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- *Short Term Rental (VRBO, Air B&B, HomeAway, etc.) Regulation Discussion*

Mr. Chavez said that he put this on the agenda because he is receiving complaints regarding VRBOs and Air B&Bs. He thought it would be advantageous for this committee to figure out a way to gather citizen input regarding drafting and updating the 2030 Master Plan. He said that Air B&Bs and other short-term rentals were not a part of the Master Plan when it was first drafted. Mr. Chavez suggested looking at other communities to review what they are doing with short-term rentals.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know the Parish's policies regarding short-term rentals. Attorney Bernstein said that there is not any regulation on the Parish level with short-term rentals. He mentioned that he's been researching this, and there are a number of approaches the Parish could go about regulating it.

Answering a question from Mr. Young regarding the number of short-term rentals in the Parish's unincorporated areas, Mr. Chavez does not know how many there are. Mr. Young then wanted to know if there have been any complaints regarding this. Attorney Bernstein said that there have not been any complaints because the citizens do not have a place to complain to. He also mentioned that there have been some issues in the City with Air B&B rentals around Cross Lake.

Since we don't have any record of any complaint of any property in the Parish's jurisdiction with this problem, maybe we should contact the Sheriff to see if they have any actual complaints that are in our jurisdiction, Mr. Young suggested. If there is, then maybe a rule should be passed, he said.

Mr. Chavez asked that Dr. Wilson reach out to the Sheriff's Office to see if there have been complaints regarding short-term rentals.

Mr. Burrell said that sometimes when you start delving into issues, you start creating problems for yourself. He does understand setting up safeguards though. Mr. Atkins agreed with Mr. Burrell. Neither of us want to see regulation where we don't need regulation, he said.

Mr. Hopkins agreed and does not believe there are many short terms rentals in District 1.

- *Discuss Ordinance No. 6146 of 2022, regarding promoting Caddo for residential, manufacturing, etc.*

Mr. Young said that citizens are moving all over the country. He said that Caddo Parish "has a lot to offer, and our name as a place to live does not get in front of people". Mr. Young understands that Caddo Parish has a website, but there is not enough foot traffic to bring people to Caddo Parish. He said that Caddo Parish's population is declining. Mr. Young said that funds should be spent on attracting citizens to move and live in Caddo Parish.

Mr. Burrell said that he approached the Red River Waterway Commission about spending money on recreational areas to Caddo Parish. He supports anything that would bring people into Caddo Parish.

Mr. Atkins is not sure about the efficacy of this type of advertising. He is not sure how the advertisements would target people to move to Caddo Parish. He supports the theme and idea of it, but is skeptical of it. He also mentioned that the Tourism Bureau does some advertising of this nature.

Mr. Young agreed and does not know if this would actually work to bring people to Caddo Parish, but if no attempt is made, "Caddo will not become a piece of information that people consider when they migrate". He also suggested spending some funds on target advertising through social media and other online marketing methods.

Mrs. Erica Bryant, Assistant Parish Administrator, believes the \$100,000 is needed to run an effective campaign outside of this area. She also said that decreasing the funding amount would limit

what can be done for the campaign.

Mr. Young wanted to know what type of advertising would be done. Mrs. Bryant said that it depends on the type of marketing campaign. She also explained that it would begin with social media, but then would lead to advertising through local channels in the target areas. Mrs. Bryant also said that this cannot be done in-house. Mr. Young suggested using online methods for reaching people who are likely to be moving.

He also asked about the effectiveness of advertising campaigns that were conducted in the past. Mrs. Bryant said that Caddo Parish has not done a campaign similar to this. Mr. Young then wanted to know if there are any other regions who've done something like this. Mrs. Bryant is sure that there are, but further research would need be had. She also mentioned that other communities with similar campaigns normally have an incentive attached to it.

Mr. Chavez said that Caddo Parish is losing its population. He thinks this is a good idea, but wanted to know if the Parish is financially stable to do this. Dr. Wilson said that the Parish is.

Mr. Taliaferro mentioned that the Lt. Governor's Office is highlighting communities within the State. He asked that Administration reach out to their office and schedule a visit. We can never have one too many taxpayers and citizens throughout our state, he said.

Mr. Hopkins believes in the concept of doing this, but "we sure need to clean up our house first". He suggested picking up the litter and trash that riddles the street first.

Mr. Burrell suggested pulling others in and combining resources for this campaign.

It was **moved by Mr. Young**, seconded by Mr. Chavez, *to recommend to the full body an appropriation of \$100,000 for a relocation campaign with an amendment that Administration reach out to the Lt. Governor's Office, Red River Waterway Commission, and Tourism Bureau.*

**Friendly amendment by Mr. Chavez** *to allow it go to the full body, but review the ordinance one more time in Committee to hear Administration's proposals.* Mr. Young agreed.

At this time, Mr. Young's motion as amended carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Chavez, Lazarus, and Young (4). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioners Gage-Watts, Jackson, and Johnson (3). ABSTAIN: None (0).

- *Oil & Gas regulations related to activity near urban and suburban residential properties*

Mr. Chavez said that this has already been discussed and a resolution has been sent to the State.

Mr. Young said that the only other item that needs to be discussed regarding drilling is that Caddo Parish is at risk due to its proximity to the only drinking water supply. He suggesting asking the state regulatory board to prevent this type of drilling within a certain perimeter of Cross Lake.

Mr. Burrell suggested more discussions be had about orphan wells.

Mr. Hopkins mentioned that there are at least seven communities being served water by Caddo Lake, which is full of well. He also said that there have been several regulations put in place to protect it as a water supply.

Mr. Atkins said that the wells in Caddo Lake are oil wells, whereas the wells in Cross Lake are gas wells. Which are completely different. He said that the risks of environmental damage from gas wells are meaningfully less than the environmental risks from an oil well.

Mr. Young said that Dr. Salvatore gave a presentation regarding the dangers of drilling near a drinking water supply. He said that there are thousands of abandoned wells, whose locations are unknown, that can connect in deep horizontal drilling, pressurize solvents of an industrial nature and can create an avenue for them to come to the surface. If that happens in Cross Lake, it could not be used as a clean water supply.

Mr. Chavez suggested inviting Dr. Salvatore to the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. Burrell explained that having wells in the lake is different than fracking, which creates vibrations underground that could cause pollution. He said that the pressure of the chemicals that are pushed through can infiltrate the water supply.

Mr. Atkins encouraged his colleagues to be cautious when being asked to adopt positions that are based on hyperbole and exaggeration. He does, however, understand that oil and gas production has and can cause pollution, but cautioned the Commissioners to be aware of exaggerations. He also

explained that fracking occurs at 10,000 feet, and the standard drinking water is at 1,000 feet, so there is several thousand feet of rock between the fracking and the water.

Mr. Young said that due the depths of the fracking, the effects of it are “very likely to be latent; very likely to be delayed; and very likely to be impossible to prove in court”. He urged to exercise caution in every direction.

- *Discuss Legislative Priorities: Crime Lab funding, etc.*

Mr. Joseph Jones, Assistant Director of NWLA Crime Lab, introduced himself to the Committee. He explained that the shortfalls have a lot to do with COVID. The Crime Lab is primarily financed through court costs. The northern twenty-nine parishes of Louisiana are served by the Lab. He also mentioned that the revenue source has declined since 2017. The Crime Lab in Shreveport, Monroe, and Alexandria with a staff of thirty-four people costs about \$6M to run each year. He also said that this year, the projection is about \$3M in court costs.

Mr. Atkins understands that revenues are down, but wanted to know if the Crime Lab has done anything to meaningfully reduce its expenses. Mr. Jones said that 10% of the staff was let go and utilities are shut down at night.

He also said that they are looking for outside revenue sources. They recently signed a contract with LSU to provide toxicology reports, which should generate \$100,000 to \$150,000 in testing per year. They are also leasing out space to the Shreveport Police Department.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know if the services provided to law enforcement agencies are free of costs. Mr. Jones said that it is associated with the back end of court costs.

Mr. Chavez wanted to know if any of the parishes have an appropriation to the Crime Lab yearly. Mr. Jones said that it is strictly court costs.

Mr. Chavez then wanted to know if they could possibly offer something for the medical community. Mr. Jones said that they are exploring it, but clinical testing is a different type of accreditation. Mr. Chavez then wanted to know where would one go to become a criminal pathologist. Mr. Jones said that a general Criminal Justice Degree would suffice, but there are several local programs that focus on natural sciences, biology, chemistry, and physics. Several of the staff at the Crime Lab have an undergraduate or a Master's Degree.

Mr. Chavez then wanted to know if Caddo Parish has the capabilities to add a forensics school for Criminal Justice. Mr. Jones said that he would love to work with the Parish on that endeavor.

Mr. Burrell asked about autopsies. He wanted to know if the bodies are sent to Arkansas for autopsies. He suggested that they be done here. Mr. Jones said that last year, about 327 autopsies were done last year for this region, but there were an additional 600 that were sent to Arkansas or Mississippi. Typically, those are done privately for about \$2,000 each. Mr. Jones said that they are in the works to bring this back to Louisiana.

Mr. Young wanted to know if the court is “up and running and at full steam”. Dr. Wilson said that they are. He suggested having more judges to hear more criminal cases more efficiently. Dr. Wilson explained that they've been having discussions with several judges about expediting the adjudicated process. He that they used to use a “rocket docket” approach.

Dr. Wilson also mentioned that COVID has had a tremendous impact on the revenue for the Crime Lab, but so has the increase in diversion programs.

Mr. Young wanted to know if there was an ETA on implementing the rocket docket approach. Dr. Wilson said that they've asked for immediate relief on this program.

Answering a question from Mr. Young regarding more judicial seats, Dr. Wilson said that he is not equipped to answer this question, but he does feel that there needs to be a way to expedite the process. Mr. Young wanted to know how many judicial seats there are. Mrs. Bryant said that there are five criminal judges, with twelve total. Mr. Young said that this may not be enough for this jurisdiction.

Mr. Young wanted to know if any of the parishes contribute to the Crime Lab directly. Mr. Jones said that they only receive court costs. He also explained that the statute set up for the Crime Lab to operate says that the parishes “may” contribute, but not “shall”. He said that there is no real obligation from the parishes to contribute to them.

Mr. Jones also mentioned that they've reached out to all of the parishes asking for financial assistance. Mr. Young wanted to know if they've heard back from any of the parishes. Mr. Jones said that they have not yet.

Attorney Frazier pointed out that the state statute also limits the amount of contribution from each parish's pro rata share. She said that number is based on the number of cases. Attorney Frazier said that this could also be a candidate for revenue replacement.

Mr. Chavez wanted to know if there is still ARP funds available. Mrs. Bryant explained that they have not expended any of the funds with the exception of internal Caddo Administration items. She said that they have not signed agreements for any other drawdowns.

Dr. Wilson said that there are a couple of the items on the funding list that may not be eligible for ARP funds, so Administration may come back to the Commission and ask that those funds be reallocated for another purpose, such as this.

Dr. Wilson wanted to know if the request from the Crime Lab included the City of Shreveport. Mr. Jones explained that the spreadsheet was put together with the pro rata share to all twenty-nine parishes as a bridge for them to "hopefully stay alive until this summer". He also said that they've received a commitment from the Governor's Office an allocation of \$1.5M. Mr. Jones is asking for operating costs to allow the Crime Lab to continue to operate. Dr. Wilson also pointed out that the State funds several crime labs in South Louisiana, but not North Louisiana. Mr. Jones said that to his knowledge, there's no one that gets a line item from the State to operate a crime lab.

Dr. Wilson wanted to know if Desoto Parish will be providing the Crime Lab with \$100,000. Mr. Jones said that they are.

Mr. Hopkins agreed that this is a shortfall, which is what the ARP funds are all about. Mr. Jones said that their revenues are primarily through the district court, city court, and mayors' courts with the mayor's courts being the most stable. Mr. Hopkins then wanted to know if any adjustments have been made to the percentages added to court costs. Mr. Jones said that they have not in the past 8-12 years.

Mr. Burrell said that this is an important operation. He wanted to know if this was a one-time request. Mr. Jones said that it was. Mr. Burrell then wanted to know why the criminal jurisdictions are not contributing to the Crime Lab. Mr. Jones said that they do have a few sheriffs that are on their commission. He also mentioned that Sheriff Prator sits on the executive committee and has not provided any funding yet. Mr. Jones also said that Sheriff Prator did not tell him no.

Mr. Burrell suggested that the Crime Lab speak with the legislators to change "may" to "shall".

Mr. Taliaferro wanted to know if there were any grants for DOJ funding. Mr. Jones said that they do receive a handful of grants from the DOJ, but he said that it is project funding that has to be extinguished.

- *Discuss Ordinance No. 6213 of 2022, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Economic Development Fund for Juneteenth events, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

Mr. Burrell said that Juneteenth is now a holiday, and he passed legislation to allow for fireworks during the celebration. He said that the Juneteenth events bring people from all over. He also mentioned that it is budget neutral.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know where the money will be spent. Mrs. Bryant said that some of these monies were appropriated last year for fireworks, but the fireworks show did not happen. She also said that some of the funds will be appropriated for an educational piece for students informing them about Juneteenth.

It was **moved by Mr. Chavez**, seconded by Mr. Hopkins, *to recommend to the full body an appropriation of \$20,000 for Juneteenth Day Celebration events and provide an economic impact study.* **Motion carried**, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Chavez, Lazarus, and Young (4). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioners Gage-Watts, Jackson, and Johnson (3). ABSTAIN: None (0).

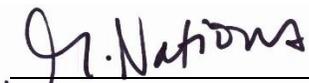
- *Discuss Ordinance No. 6146 of 2022, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Economic Development Fund in the amount of \$3,000 for Lady Bass Anglers Association and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

Mr. Hopkins said that this is a national group who would like to hold a national tournament on Caddo Lake in May. He provided an economic impact study to the Committee. He said that this will pay for itself and involves the community.

It was **moved by Mr. Chavez**, seconded by Mr. Hopkins, *to recommend to the full body an appropriation of \$3,000 for LBAA events.* **Motion carried**, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Chavez, Lazarus, and Young (4). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioners Gage-

Watts, Jackson, and Johnson (3). ABSTAIN: None (0).

There being no more business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 1:29 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".

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Assistant Commission Clerk