

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION OF THE  
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION  
HELD ON THE 20<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF APRIL, 2020

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

The invocation was given by Mrs. Gage-Watts, and Mr. Epperson led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CITIZENS COMMENTS**

Ms. Jayne Tappe submitted the following statement:

*I want to state my SINCERE CONCERN about getting anything approved more than we already have in place for absentee voting. I truly don't believe this is necessary. This is just a way to manipulate votes. I don't know that it can be held to the same standards for verification of identity, like in person voting. This is a NO NO NO. I would like to stress my STRONG RECOMMENDATION that this not be approved. And that NOTHING be moved forward at all on this. NOTHING!*

Ms. Jessica Tullis submitted the following statement:

*With respect to Commissioner Epperson's concern for public health. Myself & Mr. Kracman co-founders of the Caddo Alliance for Freedom believe to change the way we vote would be disastrous. From state to state there are always numerous problems with digital voting, much less a "paper ballot" or interactive vote. A resolution to mandate a 6 ft rule should eliminate the chance of cross contamination. As well as disinfectant at individual polls. If 300 people can line up while social distancing at big box stores all throughout the state. Then the polls should be no different. There is no strategic plan to verify votes. Not that the general public has been presented with. As to not see the dead produce zombie votes. Please let the state legislature do their job. Once again, we urge you to be about the business of the Parish of Caddo. As if the agenda isn't extensive enough, we're once again presented with national & state issues.*

**ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

Dr. Wilson announced that a Public Works employee has passed away due to COVID-19. He offered his condolences to the family and friends of this employee.

**CERTIFICATE FOR TELECONFERENCE**

WHEREAS, the Governor of the State of Louisiana has issued Proclamation Number 33 JBE 2020, stating that, due to the current Public Health emergency declared in the Governor's Proclamation Number 25 JBE 2020, and citing the provisions of La. R.S. 29:721, et seq., granting him the authority to control the "ingress and egress to and from a disaster, the movement of persons within the area, and the occupancy of premises therein; and

WHEREAS, the Governor, in Proclamation Number 33 JBE 2020, has limited all gatherings of 10 or more people, for public safety purposes; and

WHEREAS, Governor has issued a general stay at home order “unless performing an essential activity,” 33 JBE 2020, Section 3; and

WHEREAS, attendance at a Caddo Parish Commission Work Session meeting is not stated in the list of essential activities, listed in 33 JBE 2020, Section 3; and

WHEREAS, the usual conduct of the meeting would require travel and the presence of a number of persons in excess of ten (10); and

WHEREAS, the Governor of the State, in Proclamation Number 30 JBE 2020, Section 4, issued on March 16, 2020, has invoked the aforementioned statutes authorizing him to allow attendance at essential governmental meetings via teleconference or video conference during the pendency of this emergency; and

WHEREAS, the Governor of the State, in Proclamation Number 41 JBE 2020, Section 13, issued on April 2, 2020, has extended the Stay-At-Home Order until Thursday, April 30, 2020; and

THEREFORE, the Caddo Parish Commission hereby certifies that it will not be able to obtain a quorum and convene a meeting in a public forum on April 20, 2020 due to the Governor’s proclamations, and will be required to meet by video conference, and, if necessary teleconference, on that date as allowed by law and the Proclamations of the Governor listed above.

Date: April 15, 2020

/s/Mario Chavez, President

#### **COMMISSION REMARKS**

- Mr. Atkins stated that the Economic Development Committee. The Committee voted to forward the Frymaster ITEP to the full body. The Committee also voted to forward Southern University’s request for funding for its Aerospace Program, Nursing Program, and MS-KICK Program.

- Mr. Lyndon B. Johnson talked about the gardens in the MLK area. He would like to keep this garden going because it is a food desert. The gardens provide access to fresh produce to the residents of that area. He would also like the community garden to be considered for the NACo Achievement Award.

He also discussed the roads on Mallard Bay. He said that grass is growing up between the asphalt. He requested that Public Works go out there and check on those roads.

- Mr. Burrell responded to the citizens comments in regards to voting. He said that it is the citizens’ constitutional right to challenge the government, but it is also the citizens’ constitutional right to vote. He said that there should be every opportunity to allow voting for all citizens.

- Mr. Epperson thanked Administration for all of their hard work during this time. He also mentioned that the VA Veterans Medical Center will be providing drive-thru COVID-19 testing for veterans.

- Mr. Hopkins requested a timeline and listing of procedures for the COVID-19 testing that was funded. Dr. Wilson explained that they are still working out details. Mr. Hopkins requested that the information be forwarded to all of the Commissioners once it is received, as well as the citizens of North Caddo.

- Dr. Wilson advised that the MLK Community Garden has already been submitted for the NACo Achievement Award.
- Mr. Epperson suggested that Administration contact LSU directly to get the information requested by Mr. Hopkins.
- Mr. Taliaferro asked for the location for the MLK Community Garden. Mr. Johnson said that it is on the corner of Dr. MLK Drive and Legardy Street.
- Mrs. Gage-Watts wanted to know the progress of the road improvements for Windemere Estates.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

It was **moved by Mr. Burrell**, seconded by Mr. Chavez, *that Ordinance No. 5956 of 2020, an ordinance authorizing an expenditure for the Reserve Trust Fund for the year 2020, to provide LSUHSC an appropriation of up to \$300,000 to perform COVID-19 testing and to otherwise provide with respect thereto be amended to reflect the amount to up to \$175,000 with \$87,500 increments, and to delete the language emergency in the title and the emergency codes in the body of the ordinance be moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction.*

Attorney Frazier noted that normally once an emergency ordinance has been approved, a regular ordinance is normally confirmed as well. She explained that an emergency ordinance only lasts 30 days, so the regular ordinance would take care of that. She also noted that the amounts are incorrect in the ordinance, so an amendment is needed to reflect the correct amounts.

Mr. Taliaferro wanted to know if the funding were still focused on the community clusters and the rural areas of the Parish. Attorney Frazier stated that was correct. She also explained that the exact same ordinance would be passed, but without the term emergency or emergency codes.

Mr. Burrell commended everyone for working together on this.

Mr. Lyndon B. Johnson stated that several of the hospitals are testing at the hospitals as well as several offsite locations. He also explained that the Parish will also be in a crunch for money due to the loss revenues because of COVID-19. He does not see the need for the Parish to fund this project because it is already being done throughout the Parish. He said that the project is a worthy project, but does not feel that the funding is needed since there are several test sites in the Parish.

Mr. Epperson also mentioned that all of the VA appointments have been cancelled due to the corona virus. He also explained that the VA clinics are the back-up systems for the hospitals. Mr. Epperson also feels that the dollar amount put towards this project should have been at a lesser amount.

Mr. Burrell said that testing is the number one item on the list to re-open this country and state.

Mr. Taliaferro stated that he was under the impression that some of the funding would be used to stand up a lab to analyze the field-testing results to expedite the results. Mr. Chavez explained that the funding would be used for a mobile unit as well as a lab.

Mrs. Gage-Watts advised that she will be abstaining from the motion due to Oschner-LSU being her employer. She also wanted to if the school could be reimbursed for the claim through Medicaid/Medicare in the low-income areas. Attorney Frazier stated that it is her understanding that this is

for the cost associated with being able to provide the units and the lab work. Mrs. Gage-Watts also wanted to know if the individuals would have to see a doctor prior to being tested. Attorney Frazier said that they would need to follow the CDC Guidelines.

Mr. Hopkins pointed out that the title is being changed, which has already been advertised in the Official Journal for introduction on Thursday. Attorney Frazier explained that it would have to layover again.

Mr. Epperson wanted to know if there will be a document spelling out what is exactly being done with the funds. Attorney Frazier said that at this point, the emergency ordinance will still be in place along with a CEA. The CEA does not have to be voted up on.

The Deputy Clerk asked if the ordinance should be postponed for introduction until the next Regular Session or to leave it as is. Attorney Frazier said that the ordinance could be left as is, but will be introduced twice.

Mr. Johnson wanted clarification regarding the funding in the two increments. Mr. Cawthorne said that they would receive \$87,500 based upon the costs and reports given to the Commission.

Mr. Johnson then wanted to know if they would still receive the additional \$87,500 if the first increment has not been spent. Attorney Frazier said that if they report less, then they would receive less based upon that first amount. They would then receive up to \$87,500 based on reports and receipts. Mr. Johnson then wanted to know the length of time they would have to spend the whole amount. Attorney Frazier said that they would have up until the end of the calendar year as long as it is spent for this purpose. She also pointed out that there is never an end date for any of the appropriations other than the calendar year. Mr. Johnson believes that this project should have an end date. Attorney Frazier mentioned that the funds could be used for a resurgent of the virus.

Mr. Cawthorne said that if the country is to open back up, there would need to be an ample amount of testing done as a mechanism to open the economy back up.

Mr. Taliaferro agreed with Mr. Johnson in that the Parish's money situation has changed. He also agreed that there are mobile testing facilities throughout the Parish, and those who are sick are encouraged to see their doctor. Mr. Taliaferro believes that the Commission should be mindful of the money being spent now.

Mr. Burrell said that there is a critical situation in our Parish, State, and country. He said that there are several unknowns regarding this virus. He also pointed out that the Commission has already committed to this project.

**Call for the Question by Mr. Epperson**, seconded by Mr. Young. Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cawthorne, Chavez, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (10). NAYS: Commissioner Johnson (1). ABSENT: Commissioner Jackson (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

At this time, Mr. Burrell's motion carried as amended, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cawthorne, Chavez, Epperson, Hopkins, Lazarus, and Young (8). NAYS: Commissioners Johnson and Taliaferro (2). ABSENT: Commissioner Jackson (1). ABSTAIN: Commissioner Gage-Watts (1).

It was **moved by Mr. Atkins**, seconded by Mr. Lyndon B. Johnson, *that Resolution No. 25 of 2020, a resolution of the Caddo Parish Commission approving Frymaster LLC for participation in the Industrial Tax Exemption Program, 8700 Line Avenue, Shreveport of the project site* be moved to Thursday's agenda.

Mr. Atkins said that this issue came up in the Economic Development Committee today, and it was approved unanimously. He said that Frymaster is trying to grow their company. This investment will strengthen their position in town and hopefully grow their structure.

Mr. Cawthorne wanted to know how many additional employees would be created as a result of the ITEP. Mr. Atkins said that the investment is structured towards securing their existing jobs.

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

It was **moved by Mr. Epperson**, seconded by Mr. Burrell, *that Resolution No. 26 of 2020, a resolution urging and requesting that persons subject to a "Stay-At-Home" Order during an emergency be allowed to vote by absentee ballot and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda.

Mr. Burrell mentioned that mail-in ballots are being utilized nationally as well.

Mrs. Gage-Watts does not feel that any options should be exhausted when it comes to voting. She mentioned that electronic voting could also be an option. She asked if Mr. Epperson would accept that as a friendly amendment. Mr. Epperson stated that he would give it some thought and discuss it on Thursday.

Mr. Taliaferro mentioned that there is already a provision regarding absentee voting due to an ailment. He is not for duplicating an existing law or provision that is already in place.

Mr. Burrell suggested that the Commission review the laws regarding absentee voting.

At this time, Mr. Epperson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Burrell, Cawthorne, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Johnson, and Young (6). NAYS: Commissioners Atkins, Chavez, Hopkins, Lazarus, and Taliaferro (5). ABSENT: Commissioner Jackson (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Epperson**, seconded by Mr. Hopkins, *that Resolution No. 27 of 2020, a resolution urging and requesting Congress to allocate Federal COVID-19 Stimulus funds directly to local governments and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda. Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cawthorne, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Johnson, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (10). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioners Chavez and Jackson (2). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Epperson**, seconded by Mr. Atkins, *to authorize the appointment to the Industrial Development Board to fill the unexpired term left by the resignation of Ms. Tanita Gilbert-Baker; term to expire August 22, 2023* be moved to Thursday's agenda. Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cawthorne, Chavez, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Johnson, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (11). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Jackson (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Lyndon B. Johnson**, seconded by Mr. Atkins, *to authorize the reappointment of Mr. James Gilliam to the Lakeview Waterworks District; term to expire March 17, 2025* be moved to Thursday's agenda. Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cawthorne, Chavez, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Johnson, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (11). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Jackson (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

#### **COMMUNIQUES/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- Mr. Atkins commended the Deputy Commission Clerk for "stepping up" and is doing a great job. Mr. Burrell agreed.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

- *Ordinance No. 5946 of 2020, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Riverboat Fund to provide an appropriation for the Southern Hills Homeowners Association (SHHA) and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 5947 of 2020, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Economic Development Fund to provide an appropriation to Strategic Action Council of Northwest Louisiana and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 5948 of 2020, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Riverboat Fund in the amount of \$7,000 to provide an appropriation to Ivy Crown Community Services, Inc. and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 5949 of 2020, 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*
- *Ordinance No. 5950 of 2020, an ordinance to establish the salary of the Commission Clerk pursuant to Section 3-10 of the Home Rule Charter for Caddo Parish, to adopt a compensation schedule for that position, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 5951 of 2020, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Economic Development Fund in the amount of \$10,000 to provide an appropriation for Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 5952 of 2020, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Economic Development Fund in the amount of \$8,489 to provide an appropriation for the Safe Summer Program for funds remaining at December 31, 2019 and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Introduction of Ordinance No. 5953 of 2020, an ordinance to donate surplus property under Chapter 19, Article II, Division 3 of the Code of Ordinances relative to Donation of Adjudicated Property acquired by the Parish under L.A.R.S. 47:2236 et seq., to authorize the donation of property to Northwest*

*Louisiana Community Development Corporation for a public purpose, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

- *Introduction of Ordinance No. 5954 of 2020, an ordinance to close and abandon a portion of the dedication of Bel-Mar Drive, in the Parish of Caddo, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Resolution No. 16 of 2020, a resolution to authorize the Caddo Parish Administrator to request and authorize the Louisiana State Mineral & Energy Board and the Office of Mineral Resources to accept nominations and advertise for oil, gas, and mineral leases, accept bids, and execute oil, gas, and mineral leases on certain mineral interests owned by the Parish of Caddo, and otherwise providing with respect thereto*
- *Resolution No. 17 of 2020, a resolution to urge and request Congress to make changes to the Medicaid Exclusion Provision, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Resolution No. 18 of 2020, a resolution proclaiming March 28, 2020 as 'Blinded Veterans Day' in Caddo Parish*
- *Resolution No. 19 of 2020, a resolution recognizing and declaring March 2020 as 'National Women's History Month'*
- *Resolution No. 20 of 2020, a resolution proclaiming March 18, 2020 as 'National Take Down Tobacco Day' in Caddo Parish*
- *Resolution No. 21 of 2020, a resolution proclaiming April 2, 2020 as 'Light It Up Blue 2020 Autism Awareness Day' in Caddo Parish*
- *Resolution No. 22 of 2020, a resolution to adopt special signage to designate Stewart Drive as Mr. Bill Bradford Drive, and otherwise providing with respect thereto*
- *Confirm appointments to the Quadrennial Charter Review Committee (6 to be selected): 1. Tom Arceneaux, 2. Major Rolland Coleman Ret USAF, 3. RJ Johnson, 4. Ken Krefft, 5. Calvin Ben Lester, 6. Randall Liles, 7. Rudy Morton, 8. Joyce W. Rogers, 9. Dr. Melva Kristi Turner-Williams, 10. Ryan Williams*
- *Confirm appointment to the Industrial Development Board (1 to be selected) to fill the unexpired term left by the resignation of Dr. Henry Armington, Sr. Term to expire August 22, 2021. 1. Lasonya Moore, 2. Fred White*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition to Principal Ginger Gustavson, 2020 Louisiana Association of School Executives Regional Principal of the Year Award*
- *Special Proclamation to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vietnam War*
- *Discussion regarding the Census Complete Count Committee for Caddo Parish*

- *Commission will convene into Executive Session to discuss litigation regarding Case No. 620773 in First Judicial District Court*

At this time, there was no further discussion to come before the Commission, so the Commission adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

/s/Michelle Nations

Michelle Nations

Deputy Commission Clerk