

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
HELD ON THE 5TH DAY OF MAY, 2021

The Caddo Parish Commission met in a Economic Development Committee Meeting, on the above date, at 1:30 p.m.in the Government Chambers, with Mr. Lynn Cawthorne Chairman, presiding, and the following members in attendance constituting a quorum: Commissioners Atkins, Cawthorne, Johnson, and Young (4). ABSENT: Commissioner Burrell and Gage-Watts (2).

Invocation was led by Mr. Atkins and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Johnson.

**NEW BUSINESS**

The Chair moved to the New Business item, *Discuss Ordinance No. 6063 of 2021, an ordinance amending the budget of estimated revenues and expenditures for the general to provide an appropriation for a Safe Summer Work Placement Program and to otherwise provide with respect thereto.*

He explained that the next two speakers are experts in economic development on how they can help Caddo Parish.

Mrs. Bryant explained that the program would allow applicants to participate based on documented economic and income level and that it will be administered by a third-party entity.

Mr. Cawthorne discussed that the program is a summer job program by Mr. Jackson that he is trying to include an internship opportunity to it with the American Rescue funding to support it. He added that New Orleans is offering a program and that Caddo Parish should try to bring something similar for its residents.

Mr. Jackson discussed that the placement locations would include Sci-Port, Shreveport Green and other local non-profit organizations and that the Chamber of Commerce and African American Chamber of Commerce are interested in hosting student workers. He added that the pay is under review, but students would work from six to eight weeks and could earn enough to afford school supplies and help their families financially. And that the program provides hands-on opportunity to learn valuable professional skills. He mentioned that the press conference regarding crime in the area included children handling guns and that this program can assist in teaching children that they have other paths to take for a better future. Mr. Jackson added that he recounted his experience in team work program that kept him productive and engaged during summer months which rewarded him in the long run. He asked the Committee to consider adopting this proposal.

Mr. Cawthorne discussed that this program is an opportunity for people to gain career leading experiences and an investment for growth and development in their economy and community. He anticipates businesses having the opportunity to hire student workers in the future if possible. He added that businesses could have partnership with the Parish and explained that Goodwill and Jericho staffing are in consideration as additions to helping administer and manage the program. And a detail for qualifications of the internship aspect is that students must be enrolled in college, at least 18 years of age with a minimum 2.7 GPA.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know if the American Rescue Plan funds will cover the costs for this type of program and whether they are confidence that Goodwill is the best entity to administer the program. Mrs. Bryant acknowledged that the program could qualify.

Mr. Cawthorne acknowledged that Goodwill has experience in internship programs and that he was anticipating having 40 interns but would need more funding to cover that.

Mr. Atkins suggested that they launch a pilot program to get started.

Mr. Johnson discussed that most businesses have budgeted for employees and that the Parish shouldn't pay the expense if the company is already hiring for local talent. He also said that McDonald's has a leadership program to promote franchise ownership. He added that fast food restaurants are a source of employment and should not be looked down upon. Mr. Johnson suggested the Parish could host a career fair to place summer students into jobs.

Mr. Jackson recalled his experience working with the City of Shreveport's program. He said that they matched workers to private employers such as McDonald's, which under agreement the employer would hire applicants. He also mentioned the unemployment rate was decreased from that program. He also mentioned doing a summer camp with non-profits where the entities would match the cost that the City of Shreveport would pay to support the program.

Mr. Cawthorne entertained the idea of providing matched funding agreement with Goodwill and Jericho Staffing.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know if that method is compliant with laws and regulations regarding student work programs. Mrs. Frazier acknowledged that they would need to establish an income requirement for the program for those sent to work in an outside organization. Mr. Cawthorne mentioned that they could apply the income requirement on just the workers that the Parish is paying for. Dr. Wilson confirmed and agreed that they would need to meet criteria with the funds.

Mrs. Frazier added that there are rules established on what the Parish can do with the American Rescue Plan funds, which may be different from what they can do with the Parish funds.

Mr. Cawthorne acknowledged that the program would be using the American Rescue Plan funds.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know if the American Rescue Plan funds required workers to be placed as an essential worker. Mrs. Bryant acknowledged and explained that essential workers is based on the function of the business, also that the American Rescue Plan funds support economic development.

Mr. Atkins voiced concerns over complications to support the summer work program using the American Rescue Plan funding and that they would need to review their program in more detail.

Dr. Wilson wanted to know if both programs will be administering the program. Mr. Cawthorne acknowledged that Goodwill will manage it while the staffing company will place student workers.

Mr. Atkins inquired about the appropriation amount requested by the entities and whether the ordinance includes that cost amount. Mr. Cawthorne acknowledged that the amount will increase to include the internship component.

Mr. Cawthorne discussed referred to Mrs. Frazier about what is needed in the ordinance to include the internship program. Mrs. Frazier acknowledged that in the ordinance they would need state the appropriation for the Student Worker program with the internship opportunity including the surcharge for Goodwill to manage it. She advised that as the program is designed they will need to define details such as requirements and other processing parameters.

Mr. Cawthorne explained that the ordinance is in the committee to amend the ordinance and add the appropriation amount for the program including the internship component before moving it forward to the full body. He added that he expected to pay program participants \$12 per hour.

Mr. Jackson discussed that the original amount was based on \$10 per hour for high school students and that the amount should be even across the board regardless of which position they are placed in.

Mr. Cawthorne was amenable to maintaining the pay amount that was originally set.

Mrs. Bryant acknowledged and advised that the pay rate may need to be flexible to be within the appropriation amount or increase the appropriation amount to cover that pay rate. She added that current rate for college students is \$9 per hour and they have been applying for months and that the amount is not very competitive.

Mr. Cawthorne confirmed that college students start work as early as late May.

Mr. Johnson mentioned the program is part time. Mrs. Bryant acknowledged the program could cost \$80,000 to host 20 students and up to \$160,000 for 40 students.

Mr. Cawthorne proposed to host 20 internship students at \$12 per hour. Mrs. Bryant confirmed that the amount is \$83,000.

Mr. Atkins was still concerned the practicality of the program and doesn't see the incentive for businesses.

Mr. Cawthorne delegated to go with the original program and to include the amount in the ordinance to be presented for tomorrow. Mrs. Bryant warned that the ordinance was to be voted on the next regular session and it would be best to have amendments prepared before then.

Mr. Atkins asked how many students would be working through the program. Mr. Johnson explained that they have up to 50.

**It was moved** by Mr. Cawthorne, seconded by Mr. Young, *to appropriate up to \$200,000 for the Safe Summer Work Placement Program.*

Mr. Cawthorne summarized the program hosts up to 50 part time interns for an appropriation of \$70,000 and a full-time internship program hosting up to 40 students at \$12 per hour. The total amount is up to \$200,000 to support both program parts and is managed by Goodwill and Jericho Staffing.

At this time, Mr. Cawthorne's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Cawthorne, Johnson, and Young (3). NAYS: Commissioner Atkins (1). ABSENT: Commissioner Burrell and Gage-Watts (2).

The chair moved to the next new business item, *discuss Workforce Development Proposal*.

Mr. Young discussed the proposal is a tool to train and install at-risk students into refurbishing housing and other community developments. He added that the 22-week project trains twenty high-risk individuals from 18 to 24 years old tasked with refurbishing three houses and is budgeted for \$400,000 providing \$5,000 per trainee. He described the costs as being flexible with donations or discounts on materials and that the program could be funded using American Rescue Plan dollars.

Mrs. Frazier questioned the confidentiality of the document and requested to share a copy of the email the proposal was sent in. Mr. Young acknowledged he will forward to her and that they have no signed confidentiality agreement with the company's proposal and is not aware of any restriction to use the document.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know if it was safe for them to discuss the proposal. Mrs. Frazier acknowledged that it was already disclosed.

Mr. Johnson mentioned that there were similar programs in the area that made trade training available to reduce idle students and youth, but did not prevail due to lack of funding. He added that they should encourage school systems to adopt programs that provide trade skills for graduating students to enter workforce and not crime.

Mr. Atkins mentioned there were programs available through the school system. Mr. Johnson acknowledged that what the career center offers is limited.

Mr. Atkins preferred to keep funding for local organizations that provide similar programs for their youth versus an outside source.

Mr. Cawthorne acknowledged Mr. Atkins and Mr. Johnson and recalled how high schools provided trade courses like masonry, carpentry and horticulture to students.

Mr. Jackson wanted to know if Mr. Young was allied with the company that sent him the proposal. Mr. Young declined that he is not affiliated with the company and is presenting the proposal as a suggestion.

Mr. Jackson agreed that providing a trade program is a great idea and warned that introducing the school system to this idea could disqualify the at-risk students due to the arrangement of magnet school's having career centers which have to meet a high standard to attend those type of schools. He added that fixing up dilapidated houses develops the workforce, community and economy. And that this proposal could be supported in the American Rescue Plan, Long Range Planning or the Pandemic Ad Hoc Committee to help reduce the costs of the program. He added that they spend millions of dollars for the healthcare and housing for the CCC alone.

Dr. Wilson added that there are opportunities for established companies that could help support a program such as this.

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



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Linda Montgomery  
Administrative Clerk III