

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S  
JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMITTEE  
HELD ON THE 25th DAY OF AUGUST, 2021

The Caddo Parish Commission met in a Juvenile Justice Committee meeting, on the above date, at 11:30 a.m., via Zoom, with Mr. Johnson, presiding, and the following members in attendance constituting a quorum: Commissioners Burrell, Johnson, Taliaferro, and Young (4). ABSENT: Commissioner Gage-Watts (1).

Mr. Young gave the invocation, and Mr. Burrell led the taskforce in the Pledge of Allegiance.

It was **moved by Mr. Johnson**, seconded by Mr. Young, *to approve consideration of items under La.R.S. 42:17.1. Motion carried.*

**CERTIFICATE OF 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;

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. (This does not affect the vote necessary for adoption or any motion).

Date: August 23, 2021  
/s/Stormy Gage-Watts  
Chairperson

**NEW BUSINESS**

- *Discuss Additional Funding for Juvenile Courts & Programs*

Mr. Ted Cox said that there was an additional request from the judges. The first request he talked about was the Family Preservation Court I. He said that it provides intensive services for families with parents who suffer from substance abuse issues. During the pandemic, it was difficult to ensure the parents were complying with substance abuse counseling. The Juvenile Court is requesting \$50,000 for increased assessment of parents in Child In Need of Care (CINC) cases to determine if drug counseling and therapy is needed. The Court is also requesting a COVID Response Officer to supervise and coordinate wraparound services and to assist with the clients' compliance with court orders. Additional funding would also be used to increase trauma focused therapy for parents and children in an attempt to lessen emotional pain and trauma due to the parents' substance abuse.

Also, the Louisiana Supreme Court—Drug Court Office reduce funding for the Family Preservation Court by \$35,000. Mr. Cox said that if they could lose their compliance officers if they do not receive the \$35,000 shortfall.

Family Preservation Court II was created to address the substance abuse issues of adults who in Child Support Court, Domestic Violence Court (protective orders), Family In Need of Services (FINS,

and the Good Support Program (work court). Because of complicated funding requirements of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the Supreme Court—Drug Court Office does not allow clients from these courts programs to participate in Family Preservation Court I, so the Juvenile Court is requesting \$50,000 for this court. Mr. Cox also said that domestic violence drastically increased during COVID, so a COVID Compliance Office is needed to ensure clients' compliance with court orders. Good Support focuses on clients with addiction issues and helps them be able to pass a drug screening test for employment. FINS addresses juvenile behavioral issues such as truancy, ungovernable, and runaways. A COVID Response Officer is needed to coordinate wraparound services for the entire family.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know if either of these programs qualify for the American Rescue Plan monies. Mrs. Bryant explained that you cannot fund ongoing programs, and both of these are existing programs. She also said that it is discouraged to fund anything that would require ongoing assistance.

Mr. Cox said that COVID has had an impact on both of these programs, and they are looking for funding to "help them over the hump". He understands that the funding will not be long-term.

Judge Matlock said that all of these requests are COVID related. He then talked about a request for \$75,000 for scholarships to help train local Medicaid credentialed LPCs in high quality, evidence based, trauma responsive treatment models for adults who are survivors of severe childhood trauma and are parents of young children. He said that the training will include, Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI), which is an intervention model that is specifically designed for children that come from "hard places", such as maltreatment, abuse, neglect, multiple home placements, and violence. There will also be a training emphasis on Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing (EMDR), which is a psychotherapy that enables people to heal from the symptoms and emotional distress that is result of disturbing life experiences.

Judge Matlock said that the trauma of adults and children has been aggravated over the last two years due to the pandemic. He said that this request is to bring the level of Medicaid funded mental health services up to the level of private funding mental health services.

He also talked about the \$50,000 Truancy Court Program request. He said that this would allow a COVID Response Office to work in close cooperation with FINS to increase mandatory school attendance. The Pandemic has exacerbated the growing problem of student absenteeism in Caddo Parish Schools, and consequently, the Caddo Parish District Attorney's Office has filed over 600 truancy FINS petitions in an effort to lower the truancy rate. This has increased the workload of the FINS Departments and Caddo Juvenile Services Probation Departments. A COVID Response Coordinator will be able to track a child's school attendance, make home visits, and meet with parents to address behavioral issues.

Judge Matlock also mentioned the Succeeding Through Achievement & Resilience (STAR) Court, which is aimed at providing intervention and assistance to young victims of human sex trafficking. STAR Court provides enhanced services, supervision, and therapy to work with at-risk and exploited children on an ongoing basis. The Court is request \$25,000 for increased mental health counseling, educational tutoring, and healthy social activities.

Judge Matlock explained that COVID and the trauma related to that have contributed to the rise in the use of meth and cocaine in our community.

Mr. Burrell said that these requests could possibly fall under Revenue Replacement. Mrs. Bryant said that they have already calculated revenue replacement for Juvenile. She further explained that Family Preservation Court 1 & 2 cannot be listed as individual projects because they are already ongoing, even if they are COVID related. She also wanted to know if Juvenile Court is asking for an increase in these programs. Judge Matlock said that they are asking for an increase of \$50,000 for each program due to the pressure COVID has placed on both programs.

Mr. Cox said that it was his understanding that there is a law enforcement aspect to the American Rescue Plan monies. Mrs. Bryant said that there is a provision if you're adding a new program. Both of these programs are ongoing, and the request is for an increased cost. She further stated that the ARP monies is not meant to fund current operations. Judge Matlock said that it is for increased operations, not current operations. Mrs. Bryant said that they will continue to research this request.

Mrs. Bryant explained that they are currently working on the 2022 Budget, and there is already a \$3.4M transfer from Juvenile. With that transfer, there is still a \$1M shortfall to cover the current operations. Judge Matlock said that other juvenile courts have amenities, like social workers, translators, etc., that Caddo Juvenile Court does not have. He understands that it is costly, but it is expensive to take care of children and families.

Mr. Cox said that it was his understanding that the ARP monies will fund current programs is COVID has had a tremendous impact on the programs. Mrs. Barnett explained that calculation cannot be counted as revenue replacement because it is federal dollars, and federal dollars not a part of the revenue replacement.

Mr. Johnson suggested that Juvenile Court break down each project to smaller tasks. He

said that some of those tasks that are in each project may qualify for the ARP funding, instead of the whole project. Mrs. Barnett also explained that the projects need to be worded differently as well.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know if the STAR Court qualifies for ARP funding. Mrs. Barnett said that it does not as currently written. She said that mental health counseling qualifies, but not mental health as part of a current program. Mr. Johnson suggested that Mrs. Barnett and the requests from Juvenile Court have a discussion regarding their requests.

Dr. Wilson emphasized that Juvenile Services is facing a \$4.4M deficit. He said that the revenue replacement will not cover that deficit. Dr. Wilson said that he is not in favor of adding additional programs when there is already a deficit. He explained that they are operating on a 1957 millage and do not have enough resources to meet the current daily needs.

The Committee then moved onto the Mental Health Court request. Mr. Cox said that there has been an increased number of kids who come through the courts with severe mental health issues, especially during COVID. He is asking for funds to hire a part-time coordinator to alleviate the workload of the mental court's probation officer.

The Committee then moved onto the next request, which is funding for scholarships to train local Medicaid LPCs so the underprivileged can receive quality mental health care. Mr. Cox said that these are specialized programs, such as TBR. Mr. Johnson wanted to know if this is a Continued Education Unit (CEU) for the LPCs. Mr. Cox said that it could be.

The Committee then moved onto the next request, which is additional funding for Truancy Court. Mr. Cox said that COVID has had an impact on school attendance nationwide. He said that there are approximately 600 truancy petitions coming through the Juvenile Truancy Court, which has increased the workload of this court tremendously. The request is to hire a COVID Response Coordinator to go and check on the student to ensure they are attending school.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know if the School Board is helping fund this request. Mr. Cox said that they provide in-kind services, but not cash funding. He also said that they do have an Attendance Office, but they are overwhelmed. Mr. Johnson said that the School Board needs to be held accountable. He also mentioned that the Attendance Office for the School Board took over a whole school that deals with only attendance. He also said that they have the resources to do the job that they are supposed to be doing. Mr. Johnson also said that the School Board is receiving monies for the student, whether they are virtual or in-class, so they should be following that student to ensure that they are attending class. Mr. Cox suggested having a discussion between the Commission and the School Board to see if there is an opportunity to attack this truancy issue.

Mr. Burrell wanted to know if the City would be involved as well. Mr. Cox said that the City does fund the FINS Officer.

Mr. Burrell suggested that some of these programs could be placed in the budget with a sunset placed on them.

It was **moved by Mr. Johnson**, seconded by Mr. Burrell, *that Juvenile Court and Finance have a discussion to see how these projects could qualify for ARP funding and implement an end date for them. Motion carried*, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Burrell, Johnson, Taliaferro, and Young (4). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Gage-Watts (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

- *Discuss Children, Youth, & Planning Board*

Mr. Walker said that this board was created in 2003 by State Legislation. It is meant for each judicial district to communicate with the Governor's Children's Cabinet. He further explained that it is dormant right now, and the issue it had was that it lacked a task. He also said that the structure of the board makes it difficult because the City Council nor the School Board recognize it making it difficult to function.

Mr. Walker suggested that the Caddo Commission adopt a resolution to ask the School Board to appoint the persons who are responsible for the education component, and the City Council to appoint the persons who are responsible for the police or city parks component.

He also said that this board "dies on the vine" because it becomes a juvenile justice committee and struggled to meet its duty. Mr. Cox agreed and said that the board is very active in Jefferson Parish.

Mr. Johnson suggested that Caddo Parish mimic what Jefferson Parish is doing. He also said that if the board members are not showing up for the meetings, to take the recommendations from the board and go to their respective governmental meetings with those recommendations.

Mr. Burrell wanted to know who has the authority over this board. Mr. Johnson said that one of the issues this board is running into is that the Caddo Commission appoints all of the individuals.

One of the suggestions is to allow the School Board and the City Council to have appointees on the board. Mr. Burrell recommended that the board be reviewed and restructured in the Legislature.

- *Discuss Juveniles Housed at CCC*

There are eight youth at CCC; four of them are 16-year-olds, and four of them are 17-year-olds. Their charges are either armed robbery or murder. It is undetermined at this point if they will be transferred back to Juvenile Detention pending their hearings, but there is a hearing on September 8 to decide on where those children will be housed.

Mr. Young wanted to know if some of these youth are being housed at CCC with the adult population due to gang affiliations that the youth had prior to being incarcerated. Mr. Walker said that historically the youth have been into one unit, but recently have been moved to general population. It is his understanding that they are in cells together, but in a general population unit.

Mr. Young then wanted to know if the practice of mixing the youth with the adult population is legal. Mr. Walker said that come December, the funding for federal funding for the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement will be at risk for Louisiana if this is not resolved.

Mr. Cox explained that the federal statute says that there has to be a hearing, and there are seven factors that have to be taken into consideration. The District Court Judge has the authority to decide where those children are housed. He also said that other parishes are housing those transfer children in their detention centers, but their facilities are larger.

Mr. Young said during the last Juvenile Justice Committee, there was conversation about keeping those transfer children at CCC and have discussions with the Sheriff to improve conditions there to make them more rehabilitative. Mr. Young wanted to know if those conversations have started. Mr. Cox said that there is a funding issue. Mr. Young said that it would be cheaper to fund improvements there than to build a new place to house those children.

Dr. Wilson mentioned that he spoke with the Sheriff, and he is having a personnel issue and shortage of 30-40 deputies. Mr. Young said that conversations need to be had with the Sheriff about the juveniles there and improving their conditions. He believes it would be a worthwhile investment.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know how many parishes have a detention center. Mr. Walker said that there are 14 detention centers, but some of the parishes rent beds. He said that the 14 centers serve all 64 parishes.

Mr. Johnson then wanted to know if the other parishes house their youth at adult facilities. Dr. Wilson said that they do. Mr. Johnson said that the Commission owns CCC, and those transfer children could stay at CCC. He said that they could designate areas for the juveniles and keep them separate from the adults.

Mr. Burrell said that there was some discussion about whether or not the Sheriff wanted the juveniles housed at CCC. He said that this is a collective problem, and this discussion needs to be had with the Sheriff.

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

  
Assistant Commission Clerk