

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 26th DAY OF AUGUST, 2021

The Caddo Parish Commission met in an American Rescue Committee Meeting, on the above date, at 1:30 p.m., via Zoom, with Mr. Johnson, Chairperson, presiding, and the following members in attendance constituting a quorum: Commissioners Atkins, Cawthorne, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, and Johnson (5). ABSENT: None (0).

Mr. Atkins gave the invocation, and Mr. Hopkins led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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;

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/Lyndon B. Johnson
Chairperson

NEW BUSINESS

The Chair welcomed everyone to today's meeting to *Review Additional American Rescue Plan Funding Requests*.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know the balance between funds available and funds being requested. Mrs. Barnett said that the remaining balance is \$2.1M.

Martin Luther Neighborhood Association

Mr. Johnson said that this organization is requesting \$30,000 for revenue replacement. He explained that they had to shut down renting the facility because they have seniors there Monday through Friday and do not want the possibility of COVID exposure to them.

Mr. Hopkins wanted to know who owns this building. Mr. Johnson said that the neighborhood association owns it. The building is paid for, and they take donations. They also rent it out to help offset some of the bills.

It was **moved by Mr. Atkins**, seconded by Mr. Cawthorne, *to recommend to the full body an appropriation of \$30,000 for the Martin Luther King Neighborhood Association*.

Mr. Atkins said that this is a well-established organization who has a legitimate operation and experienced a true decline in revenue due to the pandemic.

At this time, Mr. Atkins' motion carried unanimously.

Red G Enterprises

Mr. Johnson explained that they are requesting funds for economic development to hire three part-time employees, purchase new computers, and purchase a commercial cooler and refrigerators.

Mr. Hopkins wanted to know if this request meets the guidelines for the ARP funds. Mrs. Barnett said that it does not. She did say this request would be better suited to go through the TruFund request or Cash Mob application.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know if the TruFund operation has been set up yet. Mr. Cawthorne said that they have not signed the CEA with the Parish as of yet, but as soon as that is completed, they will move forward in accepting applications.

Mr. Atkins said that this request might be better suited for PPP funds. Mr. Cawthorne mentioned that those funds have not been available since June 1, 2021.

Mr. Johnson said that no one made a motion on this request since it does not qualify, and the Committee moved onto the next request.

Shreveport Downtown Development Authority

Mrs. Liz Swaine, Shreveport DDA Executive Director, said that the DDA is a political subdivision and was created in the mid-1970s by an act of the Legislature. She said that downtown has been impacted tremendously due to COVID, especially the businesses. Mrs. Swaine said that the DDA depends on property tax valuations and property taxes as a whole to keep the organization going. Property taxes have fallen over the last couple of years, she said. Mrs. Swaine also said that Louisiana Tower is going up for sell, and the Chase Tower might also follow suit. Because the DDA is a political subdivision, they were not able to apply for some of the grants such as PPP or dollars from the State.

Mr. Atkins recognizes the importance of the DDA and the importance of downtown. He wanted to know if this request qualifies for the ARP funding. Mrs. Barnett explained that the DDA classified the request as revenue replacement, but the description of the projects were for beautification. She also did the revenue calculator for the DDA, and because of some of the grants they received, they showed no loss of revenue. She said that this application cannot be categorized as revenue replacement, but some of the projects listed in the application does affect tourism. Mrs. Barnett also mentioned that the revenue replacement can be calculated next year through the year 2024. In the future years, this application may qualify, she said.

Mrs. Swaine said that the grant they received from Foster Campbell's Office was to replace lightbulbs downtown, not revenue replacement. She also said they have since received a grant from Louisiana Environmental Quality for three EV Light Duty Stations for electric vehicles downtown. Mrs. Swaine explained that these grants are for specific projects, not "plugging a hole in our budget". She also said that downtown is important for this City and Parish. Mrs. Swaine said that visitors judge the rest of the community based on its downtown.

Mr. Johnson said that there are some funds set aside for green initiatives. He suggested that they tap into those funds for the landscaping.

Mrs. Barnett also explained that the DDA could place a value on some of the projects listed in the description to qualify for the funds. She also said that the DDA might get into a revenue replacement situation at the end of 2022. The Commission could still appropriate those monies, but they won't be paid out until they can verify it. Mr. Johnson said that the Commission could keep a balance and allocate those funds when they are needed.

Mr. Jackson wanted to know if the City has been approached; if so, what was their response. Mrs. Swaine did approach the City with a list of requests. She has also had discussions with City Councilmembers and the Mayor's Office, to her knowledge, no decision has been made yet on their allocation of American Rescue Funds. Mrs. Swaine also said that this isn't to "boost their budget, but to keep the wheels on the car". She also said that there has been no method to put in an official request like there has been with the Parish.

Mr. Jackson pointed out that there are different pots of money beyond the American Rescue Plan funds. He agreed that this community does need a vibrant downtown. He would like to see whatever is done is done in concert or done after the City makes their commitment to the DDA. Dr. Wilson stated that he did talk with the Mayor who indicated that there are no funds in the ARP funding for the DDA.

Mr. Jackson also mentioned that the Parish has been flexible with helping out the City and the School Board for the past few years. He would like to see more of a collaborative effort and more discussions between all the stakeholders to see how this issue can be addressed. He also pointed out that the statute seems to wholly commit the DDA to the City of Shreveport. Dr. Wilson said that the City of

Shreveport does fund the DDA \$300,000 annually.

Operation Neighborhood Reinforcement Peace Practitioners

Ms. Jackson said that her organization is requesting \$630,000 for a 14-month pilot program, which will be upscaling Humana 2020 Group. She said that they are a non-profit service provider for Northwest Louisiana. Operation Neighborhood will be taking the nonviolent 211 calls.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know what the funds would be spent on. Ms. Jackson said that it would be to establish headquarters, staff salaries, pay for transportation, purchase medical supplies, get insurance, etc.

Mr. Johnson then wanted to know if this project qualifies for the ARP funding. Mrs. Barnett said that it would better for this project to go through one of the small business plans. She also said that setting up a mental health center does not qualify. The request does not qualify for the funding, she said.

Ms. Jackson said that the Humana 2020 group is already set up, but they are requesting funding to upscale the group by adding the Operation Neighborhood Reinforcement Peace Practitioners portion.

Ms. Jackson also said that this request is an upscaling operation to help the community through a non-police mobile Mental Health Response Team.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know Ms. Jackson's relationship with 211 and the Shreveport Police Department. Ms. Jackson said that she is a service provider to 211. If a call comes in, they are the first to be deployed. She said that they are underfunded, so that is the reason they are asking for funds.

Mr. Atkins does understand the need for this type of services, but feels that it needs to be more closely integrated with the Shreveport Police Department or the Caddo Parish Sheriff's Office. He also has concerns with this significant growth initiative. You're almost starting up a new business, he said.

Ms. Jackson said that her organization conducted a survey over the course of the spring and into the summer. She said that the citizens are asking for an alternative to the Sheriff's Department or the Shreveport Police Department because of the personality of the police officer when it comes to excessive force and abuse. She reiterated that they are a non-police mobile Mental Health Response Team.

Mr. Taliaferro also asked what Operation Neighborhood Reinforcement's relationship is with the Shreveport Police Department. He also requested a copy of their call logs for the time that they've been in business. Ms. Jackson said that they've spoke with Police Chief, Ben Raymond, and Deputy White, but they are waiting on that relationship to materialize. She also said that they do not have any data that they can show at this point.

Mr. Taliaferro then wanted to know how long has Operation Neighborhood Reinforcement been in partnership with 211. Ms. Jackson explained that they are a service provider for 211 contingent upon if they can get funding.

Mr. Johnson said that in some cities, there's a 311 service, similar to Operation Neighborhood Reinforcement. Caddo Parish does not have 311, so Mr. Johnson directed Ms. Jackson to have a discussion with United Way's 211 service. She did that and is now a listed resource for 211.

Mr. Cawthorne applauded Ms. Jackson in creating this organization. He said that it is much needed in Shreveport. He wanted to know if there was another entity with a track record that Ms. Jackson could partner up with. Ms. Jackson said that they do follow a model, but she would need to partner up with either the City or the Parish. She also mentioned that she could get an 85% match with Medicaid funds. Ms. Jackson also explained, with funding, they would be able to provide services and help alleviate the non-emergency calls for the first responders.

Mr. Jackson agreed with Mr. Cawthorne and said that the concept of this program was good and well-needed, but standing it up will be a tall task. He explained that they would need to get buy-in from the police department because if one of the Peace Practitioners showed up to a call, they would have to stand down to a commissioned officer. Mr. Jackson suggested that a conversation be had with Martha Carter, Police Chief, and the Sheriff.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know Ms. Jackson's current budget of her existing operation. She said that they are strictly volunteer at this moment, and they have no operating budget at this time. Mr. Atkins then wanted to know if she has any experience with managing operating budgets. Ms. Jackson said that she does not, but she does have experience in hiring someone who has the ability to manage an operating budget.

Mr. Cawthorne suggested that Ms. Jackson sit down and create a business model of how this program can be implemented into the community. Mr. Johnson said that this program could go through the EAP or CoHab to fine tune it.

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 2:45 p.m.


Assistant Commission Clerk