

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S  
PANDEMIC TASKFORCE  
HELD ON THE 1st DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2021

The Caddo Parish Pandemic Taskforce met in legal session on the above date, at 2:00 p.m., via Zoom teleconference, with Mr. Jackson, Chairman, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Epperson, Gage-Watts, and Jackson (3). ABSENT: Commissioners Johnson and Taliaferro (2).

Mr. Jackson gave the invocation, and Mr. Epperson led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**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 158JBE 2020 and Number 159 JBE 2020; and

WHEREAS, R.S. 42:17.1 allows members of political subdivisions to participate in its meeting 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 30, 2021

/s/Steven Jackson  
Chair

**CITIZENS COMMENTS**

Commissioner Taliaferro submitted the following comment to be read aloud:

My challenge to the committee in appropriating money for education about COVID is that we not merely focus on getting the vaccine or masking or social distancing, but in alternative early treatments in addition to vitamin supplementation and lifestyle changes. There is plenty of information on home treatments we can administer to ourselves when symptoms first are noticed and we cannot be charged with education if we only push one agenda item, getting vaxxed. In taking this narrow approach, we are doing a disservice to our public who often rely on us, as commission Epperson has said many times, to provide them with ALL of the information on both sides of the equation, empowering them to make the choice for themselves and their families.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- The Chair moved to the first New Business item, *Discuss COVID-19 Matters, Bring Back Louisiana*.

Ms. Daryl Jo Walters, Bring Back Louisiana, said they have provided education across the State to ensure that everyone has access to the vaccine. They also answer questions and concerns that the citizens have regarding the vaccine. Bring Back Louisiana also works with the faith-based leaders

through the community to provide education and information to the citizens. For additional information, citizens can go to [ldh.la.gov](http://ldh.la.gov) or email Dr. Hall at [tammy.hall@la.gov](mailto:tammy.hall@la.gov).

Mr. Epperson suggested that positive COVID cases be announced without providing personal information. For example, there are two individuals who contracted COVID at Animal Services who are now in quarantine. Mr. Epperson would like this to be done in all parish agencies and departments.

It was **moved by Mr. Epperson**, seconded by Mr. Jackson, *to direct the Administrator to report positive COVID cases at parish agencies and departments.*

Dr. Wilson said that he is in contact with Human Resources and is drafting a policy to address this. He also said that he will include this in his Administration Report.

At this time, Mr. Epperson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Epperson, Gage-Watts, and Jackson (3). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioners Johnson and Taliaferro (2). ABSTAIN: None (0).

- The Committee then moved onto the next New Business item, *Discuss COVID-19 Matters, FEMA Reimbursement Update.*

Dr. Ward said that he spoke with the FEMA representative last week, and there has been no progress with the Parish's application. He also mentioned that FEMA is currently in preparation for Hurricane Ida.

- The Committee then moved onto the next New Business item, *Discuss COVID-19 Matters, Testing & Vaccinations.*

Dr. Kevil said that they are launching K-12 testing this week in Caddo Parish and Bossier Parish schools. They are working in conjunction with the Louisiana Department of Health to conduct surveillance testing that will allow them to identify the spread of the virus through children attending school.

Dr. Kevil also said that the number of positive COVID cases is still high, but is trending down. He encouraged all to wear masks and practice social distancing.

Answering a question from Mr. Jackson regarding the effects of Hurricane Ida and the positivity rate, Dr. Kevil explained that it is a "blind spot for them", but they are keeping track of the numbers here. They are working with Dr. Whyte's office to test the shelters and send their strike teams to the shelters, if needed. He does anticipate that it will be a challenge.

Answering a question from Dr. Wilson regarding the booster shot, Dr. Kevil explained that a booster shot can be given to a person at the eight-month point, unless the person has underlying health conditions, but there are efforts to shorten that time. Dr. Kevil mentioned that the booster shots will be available at several locations.

He said that the testing in the nursing homes have been great, with a low positivity rate.

Answering a question from Mr. Jackson regarding home remedies being FDA approved, Dr. Kevil explained that Regeneron Monocle Antibody does have FDA EUA (Emergency Use Authorization) approval and is beneficial for certain individuals if the virus is caught early. He reiterated that it works best if a person is in the early parts of the illness. Dr. Kevil also explained that he is not aware of any testing of home remedies being FDA EUA approved, but that's not to say that they won't be in the future. Mr. Jackson pointed out that Pfizer is FDA full authorization approved. Dr. Kevil agreed.

Lastly, sequencing was performed for this region, and the Delta Variant is prevalent. Nothing that they've seen looks different.

Mr. Epperson mentioned that the VA Medical Center does drive-through testing Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. He said that it is free for veterans.

Mr. Epperson also mentioned that the LA Wallet app allows individuals to put their COVID vaccination cards on it.

Dr. Wilson said that Human Resources is preparing a draft for an Infectious Disease Control Policy for Caddo Parish employees, which encourages vaccinations and testing. He mentioned that they have not received any direction from the board. Mr. Jackson said that the motion was for Administration to draft it and forward it to the full body for consideration. Dr. Wilson said that he would like to be consistent in their practices, so he needs direction on whether they are to send it to the Personnel Policies & Procedures Committee or the full body.

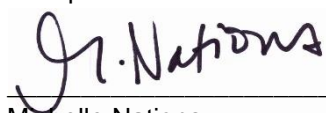
- The Committee then moved onto the next New Business item, *Rental Assistance Update, Eviction Mitigation Update.*

Mrs. Barnett said that the ERAP program is going well, and they have gone through the direct assistance for ERAP1 and ERAP2. Currently, \$4M of the \$8M from the State of ERAP1 has already been spent. The State is continuing to conduct monitor reviews and draws to the Parish, so the Parish can continue its Emergency Rental Assistance Program. Payments are being made every Friday. Currently, they have reviewed a total of 6,995 applications, with 23 drawn this morning. She said that they are drawing active files every week. Mrs. Barnett also explained that there is not a big pipeline like there was when the program was first implemented, so the wait is minimal.

Mrs. Bryant talked about the Eviction Mitigation Program. The contact information for three attorneys who have decided to help with this has been provided. The Caddo Parish Legal Office sent out, through the BAR Association, information to over six hundred attorneys. Mrs. Bryant explained that the attorney verifies the participants in the Parish's ERAP program. The Eviction Mitigation Assistance is eligible to the applicants in the Parish's ERAP program. The attorneys work through the cases at a set fee and submit those cases to the Parish for payment. She also said that they are marketing the program through Facebook and other means.

Mr. Jackson pointed out that there is only one attorney listed online. Mrs. Bryant said that they just received the other two attorneys' information, so they are in the process of updating that information online.

There be no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned  
2:46 p.m.



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Michelle Nations  
Assistant Commission Clerk