

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 16th DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 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).

Mrs. Gage-Watts gave the invocation, and Mr. Atkins 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: September 15, 2021
/s/Lyndon B. Johnson
Chairperson

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Nicole Odom submitted the following comment electronically:

W.E.B. DUBOIS CHILD ENRICHMENT CENTER mission is to help improve the lives of children and families, giving special interest to under-served children and communities. We also help to educate their caregivers. Our program focus on science, technology, engineering, and math education for grades first through 8th. Our STEM program is a unique learning experience for bright, forward-thinking school age children who will evolve into our next generation of innovators, engineers, doctors, software developers, mathematicians, and physicists. In our science and math classes students learn by doing as they take part in hands-on simulations and workshops, while making new friends and having unforgettable adventures. Our primary activities consist of enrichment programs, educational programs, life skills, and character development. These activities occur on a daily basis at various sites throughout Caddo Parish, such as Queensborough Elementary School and J. S. Clark Elementary School. We help to provide college preparatory curriculum to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. We also help to increase public awareness about the needs of vulnerable children, youth, and families.

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 \$2,075,428.

Juvenile Court

Mrs. Bryant explained that they could receive \$90,000 for revenue replacement and \$160,000 for enhancing programs.

It was **moved by Mr. Atkins**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *to recommend to the full body an appropriation of \$250,000 for Juvenile Court.*

Mr. Johnson wanted to know if the Juvenile Court will ask for this type of funding every year. Mrs. Bryant said that they assured her that they would not. She also mentioned that these services will be done through a contract, not additional personnel to the staff. Mr. Johnson asked that this be included in the cooperative endeavor agreement.

At this time, Mr. Atkins' motion carried by acclamation.

Red G Enterprises

Mrs. Bryant said that their initial requests were not covered under ARP funding, but they are requesting \$30,000 in revenue replacement, which is eligible for ARP funding. She also mentioned that those numbers would need to be verified prior to allocating any funds. Mr. Atkins suggested that Finance review their numbers and get back with the Committee.

It was **moved by Mr. Johnson**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *to recommend to the full body an appropriation of up to \$30,000 for Red G Enterprises pending Finance's review and verification of their numbers. Motion carried*, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Cawthorne, Gage-Watts, and Johnson (4). NAYS: Commissioner Hopkins (1). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

Volunteers for Youth Justice—Truancy Program

Mrs. Bryant said that they requested \$500,000. Mr. Walker explained that there has been a significant increase due to COVID. He said that this is an effort to get kids back in school and keep them in school. Mr. Walker also said that they would like to do a joint committee with the School Board and the City Council to discuss how that can be accomplished intergovernmentally.

Mr. Johnson said that he requested that the Clerk put together a skeleton of the members for this joint-committee to include the City Council, School Board, Chief of Police, Juvenile Court, and Commission to discuss how to address who covers what areas with regards to truancy.

It was **moved by Mrs. Gage-Watts**, seconded by Mr. Johnson, *to recommend to the full body an appropriation of \$150,000 for Volunteers for Youth Justice—Truancy Program.*

Mrs. Gage-Watts agreed that there are other entities that should be assisting with the truancy issue, but this community is facing crime from 17 year olds.

Mr. Walker explained that the school systems are responsible for the students. After the fifth day of an unexcused absence, they become truant and are under the Family In Need of Services (FINS) in Juvenile Court. If the child is returned back to the school system, then they benefit from the MFP dollars. He also said that over the years, truancy has decreased tremendously. Since COVID, those numbers have increased. Coming together to solve this issue is a shared burden, he said.

Friendly amendment by Mr. Atkins *to amend the motion for up to \$150,000. Mrs. Gage-Watts agreed.*

Mr. Johnson wanted to know if the same programs used to decrease the number of truants prior to COVID will be used now. Mr. Walker said that they will be using new technology, such as phones and robocalls to reach out to families. He also believes that it will be a two-year process to combat the influx of truants. Mr. Johnson said that the schools should be able to do robocalls. He mentioned that they use it for notifying parents of bad grades or school activities. Mr. Walker said that they will be working with the school system to utilize their robocalls. He also explained that the case load for the truant officers has increased due to COVID, so the funds would be used to contract persons to do case work for the initial meetings with the families.

At this time, Mrs. Gage-Watts' motion carried as amended.

Shreveport Downtown Development Authority

Mrs. Bryant said that they do not qualify for revenue replacement this year, but may next year. She also mentioned that their beautification projects do qualify for ARP funding.

Mr. Johnson said that Mr. Young is including the DDA in the Green Initiative Program. He wanted to know how much did they request for the beautification for downtown. Mrs. Bryant said that their

total request was for \$300,000. She is not sure if it was broken down in the application. Mr. Johnson reiterated that this could be handled in the Green Initiative Program that is being funded with ARP monies.

Mr. Jackson wanted to know who would be administering the Green Initiative Program. Mr. Johnson explained that the Natural Resources Committee will be discussing this program. He also said that Shreveport Green and Urban Gardening should be working on it as well.

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 2:12 p.m.


Assistant Commission Clerk