

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE  
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION  
HELD ON THE 25TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2020

The Caddo Parish Commission met in a Special Session, on the above date, at 3:30 p.m., via Zoom teleconference, with Mr. Chavez, presiding, and the following members in attendance constituting a quorum: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cawthorne, Chavez, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (12). ABSENT: None (0).

The invocation was given by Mrs. Gage-Watts, 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; and,

WHEREAS, the Governor, has further extended that declaration via Proclamations Number 96 JBE 2020 and Number 97 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.

Date: August 24, 2020

/s/Mario Chavez, President

**CITIZENS COMMENTS**

Craig Lee called and gave the following statement:

I'm the chairperson for ACE, Advocates for Community Empowerment. Just want to thank you guys for putting this very important piece of legislation on the agenda for today. Then lobbying our past Registrar of Voters, Ernie Roberson, and our current Registrar of Voters, Dale Sibley, for the past 20 years about increasing the early voting sites in Caddo Parish. As you guys know, Shreveport is over 120 square miles, so the city itself is very large, and Caddo Parish is very large considering going all the way up to the Arkansas border over to the Texas border down to Mansfield. So we're talking about hundreds of square miles. And it's very important that we have voters who are interested in the process and an easier time to cast their ballots early. So this is a very important piece of legislation. Funding has always been the critical issue. So I'm glad that you guys have stepped forward to consider this legislation, and I like the site. I would like to have three sites, but I will take one, especially at the Fairgrounds. So thank you guys very much. And I look forward to you guys voted in favor of that legislation.

Latonya Franklin called and gave the following statement:

I'm in favor of adding an additional early voting location at the Louisiana State Museum in Shreveport. It is centrally located in Caddo, and it is on Greenwood Road.

Candice Battiste, Billy Anderson, Heather Goodman-D'anna, Paula Lott, Aaron Lews, Demetri Hill, Valerie Delatte, Carol Kurtzman, Kris Holland, Peter Staten, Melissa M., Andrea Ohnesorge, Joyce Petterway, Tony Britton, Keith Hanson, Katherine Gilmer, Dakota Ferry, Debra Jackson, Donna Wiggins, Susan Clark, Cornelia Turner, Van Linnear, Anand Desai, Nilam Desai, Amanda Racine, Alpesh Patel, Gwendolyn Tennell, Clifton Starks, Jacqueline Paul, Craig Johnson, Rebecca Thomas, Shannon Levingston Mccowan, Kathryn Fontaine, Adlue Lewis, Beverly Paige, Brett Malone, Travis Headley, Amy Fultz, Marisa Sanchez, Holly Johnson, Judy Williams, Brianna Gordon, Jessica Latin, Margaret Hellyer, Maurice Loidans, James Thomas, Sumer Cooner, Pernell Trent Sr, Janice Sneed, Donna Sterner, Felicia Davis, Brandy Maddox-Stroud, Cheynita Metoyer, Virginia Parker, Shelby Rodriguez, Frances Powers, Katie Bursley, Teri Oliver, Vada Harris, Tiffany Carter, Hardette Harris, Kristi Woodard, Chris Lyon, Iris Harper, Ruth Heard, Kodi H Miller, Jerry Gray Jr., Sidney Jackson, Janet Anthony, Felicia Smith, Leslie Trigg, Jeanette Williams, Katrina Dooley, Valerie Glover, Ellen Scott, Ericka Chambers, Reginald Mack, Karisca Wheeler, Amy Burke, Trinity Bloomer, Jennifer Smith, Onjel Ingram, Judith Laroue, Sara

Patronella, Linda Millikin, Susie Smith, Linda Anderson, and Tonerical Gardner emailed the following statement:

Dear Caddo Parish, Please vote in favor of the additional early voting site at 3015 Greenwood Road Shreveport, LA 71109. More options for early voting protects voters by giving them options to exercise their vote without putting themselves at risk during the pandemic. Please vote in favor of Agenda Item 7.V!

Robert Terry, Gretchen Petterway, Brittany Mitchell, Marlene Richard, Margo Clendenin, Omari Ho-Sang, Jazmin Jernigan, Dazzmond Hill, Dyamond Williams, Rachel Mabey, Lavette Owens, Morgan Shannon, Jason Holland, Mary Thomas, Bianca Riggs, Dellanee Wade, Megan Colvin, Mary Richard, Kevin Ellis, Carol Lynch, Olivia Garvin, Emily Neeley, Julie Lacinak, Christi Thompson, Parker Ingle, Erin Smith, Venetta Evans, Sanders Devers, Leonard Brown, Zachary Fink, Leslie Scott, Jessica Hawkins, Chloe Matthews, Rebekah Lewis, Linda Piper, Tyrone Mitchell, Rose Brouillette, Samuel Copeland, Katie Caldwell, Shannon Palmer, Whitney Gaston-Lloyd, Jared Gafford, Kelly Gay, Sara Rice, Leah Thelen, April Dahm, Kaye Pedrotty, Shelia Jackson, Deborah Kacobs, Allison Hollis, Richard Hemmings, Victor Thomas, Lidethra Perry, Leanne Portman, Chase Bowers, Latoya Wheaton, Jade Kerouac, Kenny Houston, Mary Ragsdale, Shawntorria Hawkins, Terry Myles, Jalli Combs, Lauren Pennywell, Jaya Mcsharma, Precious Brown, Brandi Stephens, Eileen Velez, Joanna Lester, Latasha Alex, Lillian Richie, Ntornette Robinson, Amy Conner, Kristal Smith, Emily Horan, David Kuhn, Rutina Brown, Maronica Collins, Tracey Moon, Meter Johnson, Alexis Alexander, Barbara Kelly, Mildred Pipkin, Sheila Wimberly, Ruth Smalls, Karanda Williams, Caroline Garner, Wealthia Jackson, Eric Pamplin, Katrina Gilliam, Demetra Dennis, and Twana Carroll emailed the following statement:

Dear Caddo Parish, The November 2020 elections are just around the corner! Caddo Parish has an opportunity to safely turn out more voters if there is a secondary early voting location in Shreveport in time for the November and December 2020 elections. We encourage you to add an early voting location by voting YES on Agenda 7.V - Request The Establishment Of An Early Voting Site At 3015 Greenwood Road Shreveport, LA 71109.

Madison Poche, Jeff Kendrick, Steven Knight, Sharon Ong, Gloria Harvey, Kalah Roberts, Amy Simon, Elizabeth Jones, Kittrell White, Jackie Harvey, Colleen Kissel, Paula Oneal, Caroline Zeichner, Karen Cash, Martha Moody Boone, Donald Everard, Deborah Johnson, Zaldjuanaka K. Douglas, Rosetta Boone, Vashonda Gafford, Joyce Dunn Lars, Donnell M. Thomas, Zabrina Dishelle Mack, Wanda Smith, Lizzie Scott, Savannah Meshell, Linda M. Haynes, Zoey Dupree, Pete Callia, Michelle Pennington, Lisa Winans, Emily Weidman-Evans, Sarah Sale, Rachel Brown, Shatterica Solton, Yolanda Adams-Johnson, Kenya Russell, Sarah Lord Holoubek, Roshanda Spears, Betty Allen, John Singleterry, Colleen Johnson, Nakia Thomas, Raphael Ratliff, Nathaniel Manning, Vershonda Watkins, Amiee Jenkins, Kathy Williamson, Rhonda Marie Phillips, Dare Johnson, Elizabeth Irby, Candace Metoyer, William Elliott, Deborah Simmons, Cherry Groves, Sara Hebert, Bridgett Bushnell, Karyn Rimmer, Stacy Gray, Kiandra Houston, Jassica Bato, Vicky Specian, Melissa Wilkerson, Susan Fontaine, Brad Campbell, Martha Wyandon-Henderson, Teresa O Clark, Antoinette Haynes, Ethel Ware, Donald Sudds, Sharon Waggoner, Billi Hopkins, Lisa Hayes, Felicia O'Neal, Ramona D. Green, Sherri Mccurry, Lauren Grundy, Ronda M Faciane, Stacie Gibson, Megan Henderson, Melodie Armstrong, Maisha Clay, Emily Long, Cammy Wright, Caitlin Douglas, Arien Ragster, Kenya Russell, Natalie Elliott, and Tammy T. Wright emailed the following statement:

Dear Caddo Parish, We ask that you help make voting safer and more accessible for all Caddo Parish residents and vote in favor of Agenda Item 7.V that would establish an early voting site at 3015 Greenwood Road Shreveport, LA 71109.

Jake Michaels called and gave the following statement:

I'm a citizen of Shreveport, Louisiana in the 71106 zip code, the west side of Cedar Grove. Okay, um, I have a lot of issues I really need to discuss with other people because it's [inaudible]. It needs to be handled. Citizens are supposed to have the constitutional rights to petition the government for redress of grievances. Finally, there is no grievance process for the patients at LSU Hospital. You have to [inaudible] Texas.org, and LSU offers search that only works at Google where there is no possible way to do it even via another options website to file a complaint about it. They don't call you back. They don't [inaudible] or nothing like that. [inaudible] you know, they find out there's no grievance process for a patient. That's one issue. Another issue is that Mayor Perkins and his administration blocks citizens online with social media and with email, you know? We're trying to communicate. And that's an illegal violation of rights. There needs to be—if I have to, I'll do it myself, but the Freedom of Information Act, to [inaudible] all of the citizens who are blocked by Administration because it's a violation of rights. I am an American, and so are other people. So people that have tried to get help for police brutality at the LSU Hospital get blocked by Perkins Administration. And this is all backed up on the cloud, you know. [inaudible] you know, different media outlets, it's all information that can be given to whoever wants it. They're asked for it, there's, you know, just all recorded and then the facts. Sherricka Fields is a falsified email or contact information at Shreveport.gov. [inaudible] than the ability to ask financial questions of the administration. It's a false email contact. And you can email it yourself. Now they're thinking about this for a very long time, despite, you know, citizens complaints to Casey Brown—to Krystle Jackson who threatens people who try to get help for police brutality. They all know these things. They've already been through a battery of tests, battery questions over the phone and all this is, you know, online communication as much as anybody can answer this as well. Krystle Jackson threatens arrest to callers and you know threatens them for trying to get help for police brutality in the form of brutality by hospital

police officers gave a [inaudible]. They torture—the Assistant Commission Clerk advised Mr. Michaels that his time had expired.

Jason Heffurn called with the following statement:

I'm with the Time Out Sportsbar in Shreveport. Just like to say thank you for allowing me to voice my opinion on the bar closures ordered by the Governor. Collectively, this town's bar owners make up a large portion of the employee base for entertainment industry in this town. The amount of unemployment and things that have been issued has not been enough to sustain the lifestyle of the people for rent and bills on day to day basis. I understand COVID-19 is a real issue for our city. I'd say the country as a whole. However, with restaurants, you know, being allowed to operate under the guidelines set forth by the governor. People out bars is the one spot that is not allowed to operate. It is completely unfair and has been completely devastating the last phase of our citizens and employees in this town. I understand that we have to operate within certain guidelines that are put forth and we are completely willing to do that. I'm just asking for consideration to allow us to have the same opportunity for our livelihood as all other entertainment industry employees in the state. Thank you so much for the time to speak.

Tim Huck called in and gave the following statement:

I'm the owner of Sandbar Downtown Shreveport. And I was calling in support of Mr. Chavez's resolution. My main issue with reopening the bars is if you're going to allow on premise consumption anyway, what difference does it make if you're drinking at a restaurant or bar? The restaurants have definitely benefited from the governor's order to close the bars. They've actually turned into bars themselves or a large percentage of them. And casinos are doing great numbers of people who are going out and drinking. If you've seen videos or pictures from both bars and casinos, you've seen an overabundance of people consuming alcohol and on-premise consumption. Alcohol is the governor's reasoning behind closing the bars. And so, as his reasoning behind closed the barges on premise consumption, it's still happening every day. And that for that reason alone, he should definitely reopen the bars. It's small businesses are being impacted. Most every bar in Caddo Parish is owned by people who live in Shreveport and Bossier; all the casinos and chain restaurants are owned by people who do not live in Shreveport and Bossier. So your constituents are the ones that are being hurt this time. Just sending the Governor a message that says, We stand with the small business owners and we'd love to see them back to work, I think would be a great gesture.

Chase Boytim called in and gave the following statement:

I wanted to make comments supporting Resolution No. 66. I've been a bar owner in Caddo Parish for 15 years. I've been listening to the comments and I appreciate all sides of the different commentary. But you know, if I thought the closing bars was actually doing great justice, I would happily be the first turning my keys and say, hey, let's not, let's not open bars, but sadly, I'm seeing a lot of my customers and many other customers just go to restaurants that at this point, and the Louisiana Restaurant Association, I've been in contact with them. They've issued over 250 conditional restaurant permits, which means that a large percentage of the bars are getting open the food and so people are migrating towards those bars. And, you know, you're seeing some improvement in the numbers. But I mean, there's a lot of other factors as far as like wearing masks and that sort of thing. And I understand the concern with bars, like in Tiger town, there's these enormous bars or say Bourbon Street or whatever. But like, for instance, my place is 1,200 square feet. And now I go into most restaurants, I'm not gonna call anyone out, and there are more people in one room than I've allowed in my entire bar, even when we were open. We were operating very responsibly. We chose to have masks before the mask mandate. We did a lot of different mitigation efforts. We sanitize and took out half the bar chairs, before it was required. We did a lot of stuff and then it kind of feels unfair to be punished. And you were doing the right thing. And then now it's kind of the Wild West with a lot of restaurants. It frustrates me when I drive around and see this because then it just sets us further back from being able to open because if people continue to do that, then you know, the virus is going to spread and it's just going to keep—how long can bars stay closed? So many of these places are individually owned, community people who spend money in your neighborhood and my neighborhood, all different walks of life—and it just can't go on like this forever. I respect the Governor; I respect the White House and all who are involved. It's just strange you can have a beer, you're not forced to eat at a restaurant. The Assistant Commission Clerk advised Mr. Boytim that his time expired.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

It was **moved by Mr. Jackson**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *that Ordinance No. 5971, an emergency ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Oil & Gas Fund for the year 2020 to provide an appropriation for a mental health hotline and to otherwise providing with respect thereto* be adopted.

Mr. Jackson said that there are some issues with trauma right now. He said that this funding would create a local service provider for those who are dealing with mental health issues.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know if this would be reimbursable via the CARES Act. Dr. Wilson stated that it would. He then wanted to know if this would be an emergency ordinance? Attorney Frazier stated that this is a one reader.

At this time, Mr. Jackson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cawthorne, Chavez, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (12). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

**ORDINANCE NO. 5971 OF 2020**

BY THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION:

AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET OF ESTIMATED REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE OIL AND GAS FUND FOR THE YEAR 2020 TO PROVIDE AN APPROPRIATION FOR A MENTAL HEALTH HOTLINE AND TO OTHERWISE PROVIDE WITH RESPECT THERETO

WHEREAS, the Parish of Caddo residents have incurred irreparable harm to mental health and well-being due to COVID-19, thus creating a mental health public emergency; and

WHEREAS, the Parish of Caddo residents have suffered business closings and economic hardship; and

WHEREAS, the national civil and racial unrest has caused increased anxiety and stress; and

WHEREAS, if the mental health of Caddo Parish residents remains unaddressed, the symptoms can lead to depression, drug abuse, violence and suicide; and

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission would like to establish a confidential hotline through United Way's 211 network, as soon as possible, to connect residents to participating provider networks to add; and

WHEREAS, National hotlines do not connect residents to local providers and the best treatment is local assessment and treatment from trained mental health rehabilitation agencies; and

WHEREAS, a portion of the funds shall be used for marketing and outreach; and

WHEREAS, eligible expenses will be requested for reimbursement from the CARES Act funding; and

WHEREAS it is necessary to amend the 2020 Budget to provide an appropriation of \$120,000 to fund the confidential hotline; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Caddo Parish Commission in due, legal and regular session convened, that Budget of Estimated Revenues and Expenditures for the Oil and Gas Fund for the year 2020 is hereby amended as follows:

	<u>Budget Increase (Decrease)</u>
<u>Oil and Gas Fund</u>	
United Way 211 – Confidential Hotline	\$120,000
Fund Balance	(\$120,000)

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that if any provision or item of this ordinance or the application thereof is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, items or applications which can be given effect without the invalid provisions, items or applications, and to this end the provisions of this ordinance are hereby declared severable.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that this ordinance shall take effect upon adoption.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that all ordinances or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

**NEW BUSINESS**

It was **moved by Mr. Jackson**, seconded by Mr. Jackson, *that Ordinance No. 5973 of 2020, an emergency ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Oil & Gas Fund for the year 2020 to provide an appropriation for Providence House Emergency Rental Assistance Program and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be adopted.

Mr. Jackson said that this is a program through Providence House, but there is a gap with state funding. He explained that if something is not done, evictions in the state could be at 50%. He also pointed out that there is a mechanism in place, so that people do not duplicate benefits.



Mr. Atkins wanted to know if this is CARES Act reimbursable. Dr. Wilson stated that it is.

At this time, Mr. Jackson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cawthorne, Chavez, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (12). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

**ORDINANCE NO. 5973 OF 2020**

BY THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION:

AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET OF ESTIMATED REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE OIL AND GAS FUND FOR THE YEAR 2020 TO PROVIDE AN APPROPRIATION FOR PROVIDENCE HOUSE EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND TO OTHERWISE PROVIDE WITH RESPECT THERETO

WHEREAS, the Parish of Caddo has suffered an economic downfall due to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, many residents of the Parish of Caddo currently have lost jobs due to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Moratorium for evictions expired on July 25, 2020; and

WHEREAS, because the Federal Moratorium for evictions has expired, citizens need emergency assistance to avoid evictions.

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission would like to provide rental assistance through the Providence House if a citizen of Caddo Parish can provide a letter notifying of lay-off or reduced hours and is not participating in another rental assistance program; and

WHEREAS, the rental assistance program is for Caddo Parish residents only; and

WHEREAS, the participant is capped at two months of rental assistance; and

WHEREAS, priority is given if lay-off is due to company going out of business; and

WHEREAS it is necessary to amend the 2020 Budget to provide an appropriation of up to \$112,000 to provide rental assistance; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Caddo Parish Commission in due, legal and regular session convened, that Budget of Estimated Revenues and Expenditures for the Oil and Gas Fund for the year 2020 is hereby amended as follows:

	<u>Budget Increase (Decrease)</u>
<u>Oil and Gas Fund</u>	
Providence House – Rental Assistance	\$112,000
Fund Balance	(\$112,000)

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that if any provision or item of this ordinance or the application thereof is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, items or applications which can be given effect without the invalid provisions, items or applications, and to this end the provisions of this ordinance are hereby declared severable.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that this ordinance shall take effect upon adoption.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that all ordinances or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

It was **moved by Mr. Chavez**, seconded by Mr. Atkins, *that Ordinance No. 5974 of 2020, an emergency ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the General Fund for the year 2020 to provide an appropriation for the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be adopted.

Mr. Chavez believes that this will streamline the process and provide a touchless scenario that prospective business owners can go through. He also pointed out that this is CARES Act reimbursable.

Mr. Johnson feels that the IT Department could create a digital application at a much cheaper cost. He also wanted to know if this would go away once the pandemic is over. Mr. Chavez said that the original implementation would be a software build so that citizens would not have to go to

Government Plaza and possibly expose themselves to the virus. He said that they would be able to utilize a digital platform and fill out an application via a website. The MPC could then push the application to whomever needs to review it, i.e. City, Parish, Fire Marshal, etc. He said that this would be for the initial cost. The ongoing costs would include server space, but Mr. Chavez believes the MPC already rents server space.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know if this would qualify for CARES Act reimbursement. Attorney Frazier assumes that this is critical to the health, safety, and welfare of the public. She noted that the ultimate decision would be the Commission's.

Mr. Johnson reiterated that this digital application could be achieved inhouse with less money.

Mr. Taliaferro wanted to know if Mr. Clark approached Mr. Chavez in regards to this. Mr. Chavez stated that he did not, but was trying to assist some citizens and determined that the process needed to be more streamline.

Mr. Burrell wanted to know if a new information platform would be built. Mr. Chavez said that Mr. Bailey will be researching it further to determine if a new platform needs to be built, or if the MPC can achieve its goal by utilizing one that is already out there.

Mr. Burrell also wanted to know if there was a timeline for this. Attorney Frazier explained that if this is going to be reimbursable via the CARES Act, it would need to be expended and the check would need to be cashed by September 23<sup>rd</sup>. She said that September 30<sup>th</sup> is the absolute deadline.

Mr. Burrell then wanted to know if this was contingent upon reimbursement. Mr. Chavez said that he would like to see this project happen regardless of reimbursement.

Mr. Epperson pointed out that this resolution states that it would like to offer a digital application process in order to preserve the safety of the MPC, the staff, and the citizens. He said that this is synonymous to another item on the agenda, in which the Commission would be voting on allowing to continue to meet with a full agenda via teleconference to protect the Commissioners, staff, and citizens.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know the amount of funding the City will provide for this project. Mr. Chavez said that he has not spoken with the City. Mr. Johnson pointed out that House Bill 697 disengages the Parish from the MPC. He does not understand why the Parish would fund a project that they will not be attached to for much longer. Mr. Hopkins agreed.

Mr. Chavez explained that the City is inside the Parish, so the Commissioners who have city districts will still need to deal with the MPC. He said that this process would be more streamlined for the citizens.

**Call for the Question by Mr. Jackson**, seconded by Mr. Johnson. Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cawthorne, Chavez, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Lazarus, and Taliaferro (11). NAYS: Commissioner Young (1). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

At this time, Mr. Chavez's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cawthorne, Chavez, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (10). NAYS: Commissioners Epperson and Johnson (2). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

#### **ORDINANCE NO. 5974 OF 2020**

BY THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION:

AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET OF ESTIMATED REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE GENERAL FUND FOR THE YEAR 2020 TO PROVIDE AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION (MPC) AND TO OTHERWISE PROVIDE WITH RESPECT THERETO

WHEREAS, the Parish of Caddo currently has over 7,100 cases and 310 deaths due to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, due to the increase in COVID-19 cases the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) would like to offer citizens a digital application process; and

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission would like to provide and appropriation of \$25,000 to the MPC to help with the purchase of this digital application; and

WHEREAS, the digital application will decrease the need for citizens to come to Government Plaza for zoning and other applications with the MPC; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Caddo Parish Commission in due, legal

and regular session convened, that Budget of Estimated Revenues and Expenditures for the General Fund for the year 2020 is hereby amended as follows:

<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Budget Increase (Decrease)</u>
Metropolitan Planning Commission	\$25,000
Fund Balance	(\$25,000)

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that if any provision or item of this ordinance or the application thereof is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, items or applications which can be given effect without the invalid provisions, items or applications, and to this end the provisions of this ordinance are hereby declared severable.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that this ordinance shall take effect upon adoption.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that all ordinances or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

It was **moved by Mr. Chavez**, seconded by Mr. Lazarus, *that Resolution No. 66 of 2020, a resolution urging and requesting Governor John Bel Edwards to rescind his order closing bars, and otherwise providing with respect thereto* be adopted.

Mr. Chavez said that the bars in this area have been negatively affected by the Governor's order. He said that there are several citizens that work at bars, so they have been out of work.

**Substitute by Mr. Jackson**, seconded by Mr. Chavez, *to also urge the White House Coronavirus Taskforce as well as ask the Louisiana Treasurer to consider bar owners for the Main Street Recovery Program.*

Mr. Jackson said that several citizens and small business owners are not able to open their establishments. He pointed out that Governor John Bel Edwards gets his recommendations from the White House Coronavirus Task Force.

Mr. Taliaferro said that the decision to put Louisiana in Phase 1, 2, or 3 falls on the Governor's Office. Mr. Jackson pointed out that the White House advised him to stay in Phase 2 due to schools reopening, colleges reopening, possible hurricane evacuations, etc. Mr. Taliaferro is in favor of the bars reopening, but not at the risk of the general public.

Mr. Burrell support bar owners and understands their plights, but bars are incubators for the virus. He suggested that the Commission puts more funding towards the bars to help them get past this pandemic.

Mr. Atkins stated that he has some investments in the hospitality arena. He wanted to know if he has to abstain from a resolution. Attorney Frazier said that if he is going to be affected by someone this resolution would affect, then he would need to abstain.

Mr. Cawthorne stated that he is in support of urging the governor to reopen bar, but adhere to the guidelines for social distancing and practicing safe measures for the bars. He also pointed out that he is an advocate for small and local businesses.

Mr. Johnson explained that the data showed that bars are one of the leading causes of COVID-19, which is why the Governor kept the bars closed. He also said that he is in support of small businesses, but not at the chance of losing Caddo Parish lives. Mr. Johnson will not be supporting this resolution.

Mr. Atkins stated that he will be abstaining from this vote due to economic interest in the hospitality space.

**Call for the Question by Mr. Burrell**, seconded by Mr. Johnson. Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cawthorne, Epperson, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Lazarus, and Taliaferro (9). NAYS: Commissioners Chavez, Gage-Watts, and Young (3). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

At this time, Mr. Jackson's substitute motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Burrell, Cawthorne, Chavez, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (9). NAYS: Commissioners Epperson and Johnson (2). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: Commissioner Atkins (1).

**RESOLUTION NO. 66 OF 2020**

BY THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION:

A RESOLUTION URGING AND REQUESTING GOVERNOR JOHN BEL EDWARDS AND THE WHITE HOUSE CORONAVIRUS TASK FORCE TO RESCIND THE ORDER CLOSING BARS AND FIND A WAY FOR BARS TO SAFELY REOPEN, AND TO URGE THE LOUISIANA TREASURER'S OFFICE TO MAKE BARS PART OF THE MAIN STREET RECOVERY ACT, AND OTHERWISE PROVIDING WITH RESPECT THERETO.

WHEREAS, on July 11, 2020, via Proclamation 89 JBE 2020 COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, Governor John Bel Edwards ordered all Louisiana bars closed to on-premises consumption; and

WHEREAS, the governor took this action based on recommendations from the White House Coronavirus task force;

WHEREAS, this closure has caused severe financial hardship for owners of these establishments.

WHEREAS, bar owners have been excluded from the Louisiana Main Street Recovery Act which helps small businesses remain in business.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Caddo Parish Commission in due, regular and legal session convened, that it hereby urges and requests Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards and the White House Coronavirus Task Force to allow bars to reopen using safe methods to do so.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Caddo Parish Commission also urges and requests the Louisiana Treasurer to include bars in the Main Street Recovery Program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution shall be sent to Governor John Bel Edwards, to the White House and to the Louisiana Treasurer.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that if any provision or item of this resolution or the application thereof is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, items or applications which can be given effect without the invalid provisions, items or applications, and to this end, the provisions of this resolution are hereby declared severable.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall take effect immediately.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all resolutions or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

It was **moved by Mr. Taliaferro**, seconded by Mr. Jackson, *that the appointment of Mr. Tim Weaver as Director of Public Works be confirmed.*

Mr. Taliaferro is in favor of Mr. Weaver's appointment. He said that he is well qualified.

Mr. Jackson thanked Mr. Weaver for all of his hard work for the COVID testing sites. He also said that Mr. Weaver is normally a point person in the time of disasters.

Mr. Burrell wanted to know how this fit on the agenda. Mr. Chavez explained that the current Public Works Director is retiring.

Mr. Johnson congratulated Mr. Weaver on this appointment.

Mr. Atkins stated that Mr. Weaver is deserving of this appointment and has always been on top of issues. Mr. Chavez agreed and said that he goes above and beyond in every instance.

Mr. Hopkins said that Mr. Weaver has always been helpful and figures out to solve issues.

Mr. Cawthorne shared the sentiments as the other Commissioners. He congratulated Mr. Weaver on his new appointment.

At this time, Mr. Taliaferro's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cawthorne, Chavez, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (12). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mrs. Gage-Watts**, seconded by Mr. Johnson, *that the request to authorize the Parish Administrator to inform the Caddo Registrar of Voters to authorize and establish an early voting satellite location at 3015 Greenwood Road, Shreveport, LA 71109, the "Louisiana State Exhibit Museum" for the 2020 Fall Early Voting Open Primary Presidential/Congressional Election voting period beginning October 20, 2020 and ending October 27, 2020 be approved.*



Mrs. Gage-Watts said that she has been advocating for additional early voting locations to increase the capacity and participation for registered voters. She said that the centrally located State Exhibit Museum has ample space to practice social distancing and is easily accessible. She asked that the Commissioners support this legislation.

**Substitute motion by Mr. Hopkins**, seconded by Mr. Atkins, *to authorize the Administrator to inform the Caddo Registrar of Voters to authorize and establish a temporary early voting site at 3015 Greenwood Road, Shreveport, otherwise known as the Louisiana State Exhibit Museum, and establish a permanent early voting site location at 200 S. Land Avenue, Oil City, for the 2020 President Congressional Election beginning October 20, 2020 to October 27, 2020.*

Mr. Hopkins explained that establishing an early voting site in Oil City would reduce the distance the citizens in Hosston, Ida, Rodessa, etc. would have to drive to early vote. He also said that he spoke with the Secretary of State's Office, and they suggested the State Exhibit Museum as a temporary early voting site because it did offer more room to practice social distancing during this pandemic. He pointed out that there would be a secured line in the State Exhibit Museum and the Oil & Gas Museum. Mr. Hopkins pointed out that his motion would allow any citizen in Caddo Parish to drive less than 25 miles to cast their early votes.

Mr. Burrell wanted to know if the downtown location would remain. Mr. Hopkins stated that it would not due to the size of the building. That location would shut down for this election and move to the State Exhibit Museum. Mr. Hopkins also clarified that the Oil City site would be permanent.

Mr. Cawthorne pointed out that the reason the Marshall Street location is where it is at is due to the proximity of the courthouse. He wanted to know if this is something the Commission could do. Dr. Wilson explained that, according to Mr. Hopkins, the Secretary of State's Office suggested moving the current Registrar's Office temporarily. He also explained that the Commission would have to get legislation passed in order to create more than one satellite location.

Mr. Cawthorne wanted to know if it were possible to keep the Marshall Street location open as well as create the two additional early voting locations. Mr. Hopkins said that they do not have enough staff for three sites. Mr. Cawthorne suggested that temporary staff be hired for this election.

Mr. Hopkins also pointed out that the citizens would be standing too close to each other for too long at the Marshall Street location.

Mr. Jackson pointed out that early voting begins October 20.

Mr. Johnson said that he spoke with the Registrar of Voters, and he knew nothing about this motion. He agreed with Mr. Hopkins regarding the Louisiana State Exhibit Museum being large enough for people to go in and social distance while casting their votes. He also said that the infrastructure is already in place and is a safe place for citizens to be.

Mr. Johnson also said that moving the Marshall Street location would confuse voters. He said that he is not willing to lose votes due to this confusion. Mr. Johnson also said that the main concerns with citizens regarding the Marshall Street location is not easily accessible, too small for social distancing, and has very little parking.

Mr. Johnson further explained that the Oil & Gas Museum in Oil City is too far for voters to drive and would serve only a small number of the population.

He further stated that the additional early voting site on this agenda is for temporary use only, not permanent. He said that the Commission would need to go to the legislature for three additional sites.

Mr. Epperson agreed with Mr. Johnson in that the Marshall Street location must stay to not confuse the voters this close to the early voting dates. He said that they could go to the legislature next year to request additional early voting sites and place them throughout the Parish.

Mr. Epperson pointed out that the northern part of the Parish consists mainly of land mass, and is not densely populated.

Mr. Burrell pointed out that several people called in and submitted public comments in favor of the Greenwood Road site. He said that no one called in support of Oil City. Mr. Chavez pointed out that both locations were not published. Mr. Burrell is also concerned with the amount of time between now and early voting.

Mr. Young wanted to know how the public will be informed of an additional early voting site. Dr. Wilson said that there are 53 days until the start of early voting, but the site must be in place by October 13. He also explained that it would cost about \$20,000 to create the early voting site, and approximately \$15,000 per year to maintain it. He also said that there will need to be an informational campaign to inform citizens of the early voting locations. Dr. Wilson also mentioned that there is \$100,000 in the budget for the whole project.

Mr. Young also mentioned that there are population concerns as well as geographical concerns regarding the location of the early voting sites. He said that he will be in support of Mr. Hopkins' substitute motion because it addresses both concerns.

Mr. Hopkins agreed with Mr. Burrell in that no one from Oil City called because it was not advertised on the agenda for a possible location. Mr. Hopkins also agreed that the majority of the population is in Shreveport, but the question is equal access. He said that those citizens that move out to the country do not give up their access to voting. He said that there is a hardship for those citizens who would like to early vote. He said that his motion would provide equal access to every citizen in this Parish.

Mr. Atkins wanted to go on record to say that the Fairgrounds is not a fair and balanced location for an early voting site. He would like the Marshall Street location to stay. **Point of Clarification from Mr. Johnson** regarding the Fairgrounds being a balanced location. Mr. Atkins said that this location is not fairly balanced politically. Mr. Johnson said that there is not a location in Caddo Parish that would be politically balanced.

Mr. Johnson continued and said that Caddo Parish is a democratic parish because Shreveport has the majority of the voters, and they vote democratic. Mr. Atkins believes that the downtown location is a commonly visited area by both Republicans and Democrats.

Answering a question from Mr. Chavez regarding whether this would be reimbursable via the CARES Act, Dr. Wilson stated that anything that is COVID related and changes the way the Parish does business should be a candidate for reimbursement.

Mr. Chavez asked for Dr. Wilson's recommendation on the early voting site. Dr. Wilson said that if the Commission decides today, the Registrar would then assemble the Election Board who would go and look at the site to determine if it meets certain criteria. If it does, then it will go before the Secretary of State's Office. If lines are secure at that site, the process can be expedited. Dr. Wilson said that they could also come back and let the Commission know that this could not be achieved in time for the November election.

Mr. Johnson reiterated that the Greenwood Road location is a safe and easily accessible location. He pointed out that the citizens could spread out, there is plenty of parking, and all the citizens know where the Fairgrounds is located. He feels that the Oil City location is too far away to serve the majority of the citizens of the Parish.

**Substitute motion by Mr. Epperson**, seconded by Mr. Atkins, *to keep the current early voting site downtown, move funds over for the 2020 site, and lobby the Legislature for an additional three sites in 2021.*

Mr. Epperson said that this would give the Parish five early voting sites that would be geographically and equally located throughout the Parish.

Mr. Cawthorne wanted to know how the current Registrar feel about eliminating the current site and moving it to the Fairgrounds. Mr. Johnson said that he does not know about this. Mr. Cawthorne suggested that a conversation be had with Mr. Sibley in regards to this. He also suggested that the current site stays in place with two additional sites, one located at Greenwood Road and the other at the Oil City location.

**Call for the Question by Mr. Lazarus**, seconded by Mr. Atkins. Motion failed, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Burrell, Chavez, Epperson, Hopkins, Johnson, Lazarus, and Taliaferro (7). NAYS: Commissioners Atkins, Cawthorne, Gage-Watts, Jackson, and Young (5). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

At this time, Mr. Epperson's substitute motion failed, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Chavez, Epperson, and Lazarus (4). NAYS: Commissioners Burrell, Cawthorne, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Johnson, Taliaferro, and Young (7). ABSENT: Commissioner Jackson (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

At this time, Mr. Hopkins' substitute motion failed, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Chavez, Hopkins, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (6). NAYS: Commissioners Burrell, Cawthorne, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jackson, and Johnson (6). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

At this time, Mrs. Gage-Watts' original motion failed, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Burrell, Cawthorne, Gage-Watts, Jackson, and Johnson (5). NAYS: Commissioners Atkins, Chavez, Epperson, Hopkins, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (7). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Epperson**, seconded by Mr. Chavez, *to request that the Parish Attorney would immediately initiate appropriate action to file a lawsuit on behalf of the Caddo Parish Commission for an injunction suspending the intent of Act 302 enacted by the Louisiana State Legislature relative to virtual meetings and agenda items of local governments with the appropriate judicial court system be approved.*

Mr. Epperson said that the HVAC ventilation and filtration system has been found to be a spread of COVID. He said that there were two potential outbreaks at Government Plaza. He said that the corona virus has not gone away, and there are over 5 million cases of COVID in the United States. He would like to continue conducting the business of the Parish via teleconference. He asked that the Commissioners approved this legislation.

Mr. Hopkins wanted to know if this would be a declaratory injunction in District Court. Attorney Frazier that it would, but it would have to be in the 19<sup>th</sup> JDC in Baton Rouge where the Legislature sits.

Mr. Hopkins is not fond of one government body suing another government body.

**Amendment by Mr. Jackson**, seconded by Mr. Burrell, *that the lawsuit be filed with the federal court.*

Mr. Jackson explained that if one Commissioner cannot come in due to the concerns regarding their health, then their constituents will not be represented. He said that this would disenfranchise that district.

Attorney Frazier said that they have looked at federal cases, but they deal more with individual rights of the person being affected, not by the rights of the Parish or governing body. The federal action would be to have individual plaintiffs.

At this time, Mr. Jackson withdrew his amendment.

Mr. Young said that this is a new law governing a new situation, and there are no case laws about it. He also said that Legal has advised that there are grounds to challenge it based on its lacking of a rational basis and possibly interfering with the normal function of the Charter. He said that it does seem appropriate to get a judge's opinion.


Mr. Chavez said that he will be in support of this request.

Mr. Taliaferro wanted to know what the Parish is suing for. Mr. Chavez said that the lawsuit would be to continue the meetings via teleconference with a full agenda while Louisiana is in a state of emergency.

At this time, Mr. Epperson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Burrell, Cawthorne, Chavez, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Taliaferro, and Young (10). NAYS: Commissioners Atkins and Lazarus (2). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

There was no further discussion to come before the Commission, so the meeting was adjourned at 6:21 p.m.

  
Michelle Nations  
Assistant Commission Clerk

  
Mario Chavez  
President