

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S  
JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMITTEE  
HELD ON THE 17<sup>th</sup> DAY OF JUNE, 2019

The Caddo Parish Juvenile Justice Committee met in legal session on the above date, at 2:00 P.M., in the Government Chambers Conference Room, with Mrs. Stormy Gage-Watts, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Gage-Watts, Louis Johnson, Lyndon Johnson and Middleton (4). ABSENT: Commissioners Bowman and Doug Dominick (2).

Also, in attendance were Parish Administrator Dr. Woody Wilson, Parish Attorney Donna Frazier, and Juvenile Justice Director Clay Walker.

The invocation was given by Mr. Lyndon Johnson and Mr. Middleton led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Gage-Watts opened the floor for public comments. There being no one to speak, Mrs. Gage-Watts closed the public comments.

Mrs. Gage-Watts welcomed everyone to the meeting, and stated that today's meeting is to discuss the following items:

- Discuss federal mandate on the "Raise the Age Act"
- Discuss creation of Youth Panel

Mrs. Gage-Watts moved onto the first New Business item, *Federal mandate on Raise the Age*.

Mr. Walker reminded commissioners that the state mandate for 17-year-old juveniles committing felonies will be tried and then held at Juvenile Services until they can be sent to state custody. The Federal mandate beginning in 2021 will have those juveniles 14-16 that commit hardened felonies being held at Juvenile Services until transfer to state facilities but this may sometimes take up to 2 years before process is completed. Mr. Walker's point is that the changes in in both state and federal law make a complex situation even worse when you look at a small facility like Caddo's. Mr. Walker stated that they will have to work to find alternatives for non-violent offenders there keeping beds available for the more hardened offenders.

Mr. Walker stated that the changes in theory to are to separate children from adult population. Currently, CCC has separate pods but do share medical services and educational services, so Caddo will have to separate from CCC adult population and utilize them back at Juvenile Services unless other options are found.

Answering a question from Chairman Gage-Watts regarding other options, Mr. Walker stated that at the moment there is an exception utilizing the D.A.'s Office and the District Court and there are seven factors to meet to keep those 15-17-year old juveniles at CCC. Those factors would be reviewed every 30 days but can only be utilized for 180 days at maximum.

Mr. Walker stated that he would be meeting with the D.A., District Court and Sheriff to discuss these changes and what might be done in the future for this situation.

Answering a question from Mr. Middleton regarding living arrangements at CCC and meals, Mr. Walker stated that the males are double bunked at CCC but he is not aware of any female juveniles being held at CCC.

Mr. Walkers stated that his concern is to keep those hardened juveniles away from those younger juveniles so that they will not begin to emulate those older juveniles and their bad habits. He stated once those younger juveniles get on the wrong path its hard to get them back on the right track.

Ms. Frazier pointed out that at the last committee meeting it was pointed out that juvenile staff cannot use weapons or pepper sprays, etc., so her question is how will that work if those juveniles were housed at CCC.

Mr. Walker does not believe we can utilize CCC for juvenile housing and stay in compliance with regulations on housing juveniles because of many factors including education facilities, separation from adult population regarding infirmary and so on. Mr. Walker stated that the changes will only lead to bed space problems in the future unless other avenues are explored and used.

Answering a question from Mr. Lyndon Johnson regarding cell space at CCC compared to Juvenile Detention. Mr. Walker stated that the CCC cells are larger and they are not required to meet the same requirements as juvenile facilities but Juvenile Detention cells are smaller and don't allow for double bunking.

Answering a question from Mr. Lyndon Johnson regarding what happens if we decide to double bunk juveniles, Mr. Walker stated that would put Caddo out of compliance and jeopardize the Block Grant money we receive each year.

Mrs. Gage-Watts stated that she has had a conversation with Mrs. Bryant on that matter and it would be a minimal loss of revenue to the Parish.

Ms. Frazier pointed out that if other parishes are receiving the money and Caddo is not you may eventually have those parents/juveniles suing because they are not getting the same treatment or facilities as the other parishes in the state.

Answering a question from LBJ regarding those parishes that don't have facilities, Mr. Walker stated that they are renting space from another facility somewhere in the state. He pointed out that there are only 13-14 parish juvenile facilities statewide.

Answering a question from LBJ regarding the cost per bed to rent from another facility, Mr. Walker stated that their cost per day is approximately \$369.00 a day, so most places would charge at least \$200.00 a day but it could be higher. He pointed out that OJJ reimburses \$100.00 a day for housing. He also stated that Monroe has the closest facility with a large number of beds.

Mr. Lyndon Johnson stated that if they are changing the game, we need to be looking at other alternatives including exploring facilities in southwest Arkansas and East Texas if there is a way to accomplish that and stay within the law.

A discussion ensued of how sometimes juveniles from Caddo commit a crime in Bossier or Webster Parish and once they are charged/adjudicated they are then sentenced and housed in Caddo but Caddo does not send those juveniles from Bossier back to them after they are charged because the Juvenile Judges have agreed to handle those cases from beginning to end. Mr. Walker also pointed out that once adjudicated for state custody OJJ picks up that tab for juvenile from Bossier.

Mr. Middleton stated that he wants to go on record that Caddo, Bossier, DeSoto and Webster should be looking at a more regional approach to our juvenile crime and juvenile detention facility. He feels a regional approach would give the citizens of this region more bang-for-the-buck whether its retro-fitting an existing facility or building a new facility.

Dr. Wilson stated that there is already legislation that was passed in the Legislature some years ago that would give the named parishes the ability to do a regional approach. He stated that he will look up that legislation and provide to the committee.

Mr. Middleton stated that he would like to have Mr. Altimus and Mr. Rimmer come over and meet with the Juvenile Justice committee on the subject of a joint Caddo-Bossier facility.

Chairman Gage-Watts stated that we have briefly discussed a youth council and she would like Mr. Walker to address the youth council or what is currently called the Children and Youth Planning Board.

Mr. Walker stated that around 2003, the Legislature setup children planning districts (judicial districts) around the state and then the Governor has the Children's Cabinet, made up of various state departments and agencies that serve children. The Children and Youth Planning Board was to be comprised of twenty-five members where they would be the one-stop shop for everything youth. Mr. Walker stated that there have been three different chairs come and go during this period but it has been very difficult to maintain the interest for those appointed to serve on that board, partially because it really does not have a mandate on what it should be doing and the other part is that it relies upon the School System. The problems that occurs is the Commission is making appointments to a board that is heavily filled with those that work with the school system but they have no control or appointment authority for that board.

Mr. Dominick's opinion is that this board really cannot do anything as it is currently set up in state law.

Mr. Walker stated that it's a little like the Intergovernmental meetings in that they meet but there is no real way to move from just the talking phase because each entity looks at things differently.

Mrs. Gage-Watts believes we may need to go back to the drawing board and better spell out what this board needs to be doing and that each agency should work to make this successful instead of being territorial.

Mr. Walker stated that he wrote a recommendation to the State on what could make this board more functional and one way was to do this:

1. City of Shreveport appoint 8 members

2. School Board appoint 8 members
3. Caddo Parish appoint 8 members

Mrs. Gage-Watts stated that today she wanted to look at having a youth panel where each Commission district would have representation to meet and be part of our Commission meeting once a month or quarter. She believes it would give us an opportunity to hear from the children and what they feel are needed for Caddo Parish as well as them getting educated on Parish government.

Mr. Walker stated that there is a youth panel "Step Forward" that the Community Foundation set up, he will look at their panel and how that handle their meetings and what their mandate is and bring some information back to the committee at a later date.

Answering a question from Mr. Dominick regarding what this panel would do, Mrs. Gage-Watts stated she has talked to Superintendent Goree and they both believe a action plan for that committee could be developed.

Answering a question from Ms. Frazier regarding Teen Court, Mr. Walker stated that Teen Court is administered by VOJ and they meet a couple times a month. The D.A. decides what cases come before the Teen Court, he also stated that the verdicts involve some type of diversion but the Teen Court would make the decision of what type of diversion will be served.

Mr. Lyndon Jackson stated that although the MFP money comes to every school if that school does not have a program it allows the Superintendent to move that money where programs are available.

Mr. Middleton stated that we still don't have a clear vision of what we really want this committee to be so he would like to see us explore a little more before setting up a committee.

Mr. Lyndon Johnson could support a committee but not in a frequency of once a month, maybe 2 or 3 times a year outside of our Commission Meeting would be better.

Mrs. Gage-Watts stated they would continue to explore the subject.

At this time, there were no more discussions, the meeting adjourned.

\_\_\_\_\_/s/Todd Hopkins  
Todd A. Hopkins  
Commission Clerk