

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 30th DAY OF JUNE, 2021

The Caddo Parish Commission met in an American Rescue Committee Meeting, on the above date, at 11:30 a.m., in the Government Chambers, with Mr. Johnson, Chairperson, presiding, and the following members in attendance constituting a quorum: Commissioners Atkins, Cawthorne, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, and Johnson (5).

Mrs. Gage-Watts gave the invocation, and Mr. Atkins led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

NEW BUSINESS

The Committee moved onto the first item under New Business: *Continue Discussion on Comprehensive Local Plan for the Use of American Rescue Plan Funds, Review Updates and Clarifications to Federal Guidelines, and Review Applications Received and Discuss Next Steps.*

Mr. Johnson provided the Commissioners with an updated summary of the uses, restrictions, and guiding principles on how to utilize the American Rescue Plan funds:

Uses:

1. Revenue replacement—reduction due to COVID relative to most recent fiscal year prior to pandemic.
2. COVID-19 expenses—response to public health emergency and crime increase.
3. Premium pay to employees.
4. Investments in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure.

Restrictions:

1. Cannot offset tax reductions or delay a tax or tax increase.
2. Cannot be used for pension fund deposits.
3. Cannot be used for road projects (roads will be covered under infrastructure plan).

Guiding Principles:

1. Avoid creating new programs or add-ons to existing programs.
2. Offset of revenue declines should be given high priority.
3. Investment in critical infrastructure is well-suited use.
4. Be aware of state-level ARPA efforts, Governor Edward's priorities for the first \$1.6B includes:
 - a. Shoring up the Unemployment Trust Fund--\$400M
 - b. Unemployment Insurance loan payment--\$230M
 - c. Infrastructure--\$400M
 - d. Tourism & Convention and Visitors Bureaus--\$125M
 - e. Department of Culture Recreation & Tourism--\$20M
 - f. Louisiana Ports--\$50M
5. Understand what other entities are planning in order to enhance community.
6. Rating agencies will evaluate the use of the ARPA funds in formulating its credit opinion.
7. All costs must be obligated by December 31, 2024 and incurred by December 31, 2026.
8. Expenses must have occurred on or after March 3, 2021.
9. Only premium pay can be associated with dates prior to March 3, 2021.
10. Strategic Plan must be provided to Treasury by August 31, 2021.

Mrs. Bryant provided the Commissioners with a summary sheet on what they received so far. She also mentioned that the biggest change with the project summary sheet is the revenue replacement. Since the last committee meeting, the guidelines on how to calculate revenue replacement was updated. Administration significantly underestimated it since a growth factor can be calculated into the equation. She also explained that they are projecting to have revenue replacement of about \$6M a year for four years for a total of \$24M. Once they receive the numbers for revenue replacement, they can budget it for whichever projects are deemed necessary for revenue replacement. She also said that there is less recording for it.

Mr. Johnson also mentioned that the American Rescue Plan has several different pieces to it, i.e. the CARES Act, Rental Assistance Program, stimulus checks, etc. Revenue Replacement is another piece to the plan to make local governments whole again.

Mr. Johnson then talked about broadband. He said that Dr. Wilson, Mayor of Shreveport, and Superintendent met to discuss which projects could they work on together, and broadband was one of them. The School Board is taking the lead on broadband. The City of Shreveport will be allocating

approximately \$5M for broadband; the Caddo Commission will be allocating approximately \$2M.

Answering a question from Mr. Atkins regarding the overall budget for broadband, Dr. Wilson said that it will be in the hundreds of millions.

Mr. Hopkins wanted to know if this will cover the entire Parish. Dr. Wilson said that it will. He also pointed out that the Coordinating & Development Council is also working on a broadband initiative and a survey for the whole Parish to determine the weaknesses.

Mrs. Bryant then talked about Parish Funded Agencies' requests. The District Attorney has requested premium pay, revenue replacement, and other COVID expenses. She also said that Juvenile Court is requesting truancy staff. Mrs. Bryant also mentioned that they put the requests in the categories which they thought it would fit, but they haven't vetted them enough to see if they actually meet the guidelines.

Mr. Johnson said that in some parishes, truancy is the school system. It seems that it is gradually moving towards the Commission. Dr. Wilson said that the children who are truant end up in Juvenile Services, temporarily. Mr. Johnson said that this is more of a school issue, rather than the Commission's issue. He suggested that the Commission and the School Board work together on this issue.

Mrs. Bryant continued and said that the Sheriff is requesting some facilities upgrades, but they are putting that under Facilities & Maintenance. Dr. Wilson pointed out that the Sheriff did receive about \$13M under the CARES Act.

Moving onto Commission Projects, Mrs. Bryant explained that there are items listed that have already been approved and other items listed by various Commissioners. She pointed out that this is a fluid number.

Mr. Johnson said that in his meeting with the Mayor and Superintendent, they did try to address the issue with the sirens that Mrs. Gage-Watts has been requesting for years. He said that the Superintendent explained that schools can be utilized in rural areas, so the request amount could be less than what is estimated.

He also said that the City of Shreveport and the School Board will have a joint venture on the outdated IMAX theater at Sci-Port. They are asking the Commission for \$400,000 for the upgrade.

Mr. Johnson said that they are looking to bring a couple of college football games to the area. The Commission's part will be about \$250,000 for two games.

He also said that the City would like to collaborate with the Parish on providing a spillway generator to open the floodgates in case power is lost.

Mr. Hopkins said that there needs to be comprehensive plan implemented to address litter in this Parish. He said that the litter has gotten out of hand, but something needs to be done to correct it. Mrs. Gage-Watts mentioned that education in the school system could go a long way to address the litter issue. She also suggested placing dumpsters in areas for tires, batteries, and other trash for certain days.

Mr. Young also talked about litter. He said that some of his constituents have reached out to him suggesting that the Parish and the City work together to improve the City's recycling program, which could tie into an educational campaign for littering.

Mr. Young also said that there is another type of trash called eviction waste. Sometimes the City gets around to picking up this type of trash quickly, but sometimes not. He suggested that some type of program be implemented that could pick up this type of trash quicker because it does create a public safety hazard.

Lastly, Mr. Young talked about collaborating with the City to gather compost material, separate from the normal household trash collection service so that it can be deployed on the land to make topsoil.

Mrs. Gage-Watts talked about the GI Pilot Program for families making \$600 or less per month. She said that the City of Shreveport will partner with the Caddo Commission to provide an additional \$600 per month to these families, who will be randomly selected through a program to address up to 120% of the poverty rate in this area. There will be a total of about 100 participants for a total of \$720,000. Mr. Hopkins said that there are employers begging people to work in North Caddo Parish.

Mr. Johnson said that he has also had conversations with the Chancellor from Southern University regarding a program called Youth Build. It is a program that teaches young people how to become carpenters, electricians, plumbers, etc.

Mrs. Gage-Watts said that she would like to reintroduce the Gun Buy Back Initiative and hopes to collaborate with the Sheriff and the City Marshal. She said that she will provide more information

at a later date.

Mr. Johnson said that once the organizations submit their information and the list is provided to the Committee. Administration has provided a scoring rubric for the projects. The Committee will then look at the projects to rank them and award them a dollar value. This Committee will then forward those recommendations to the full body for consideration.

Mrs. Bryant then moved onto other public bodies requests. Black Bayou, Fire District No. 3, Fire District No. 4, Fire District No. 6, Fire District No. 8, Water District No. 7, Lakeview Water District, Shreve Memorial Library, Pine Hill Water District, Public Defender's Office, and Ward II have all made requests. Mr. Hopkins pointed out that the Governor put another pocket of money aside for the water systems.

Mr. Johnson asked about Fire District No. 8's request for a training center. Mr. Hopkins explained that they want to set up a training center for all of the fire districts to come and train to be prepared for another pandemic, if it should occur.

Mr. Young requested the fire districts and other buildings consider installing water tanks to catch water from the roof as a backup if the water system should go down.

Answering a question from Mr. Atkins regarding where the revenue replacement would go, Mrs. Bryant said that it would go back into the various funds. The Commission then could budget it from there. The Commission would have to go through its normal budget process to allocate those monies.

Mrs. Bryant pointed out that an interim report has to be provided to the Treasury by August 31, 2021 on how the Commission plans to utilize these funds.

Mr. Johnson scheduled the next Committee meeting for July 15, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. to finalize the major categories and amounts for each budget. Mr. Hopkins wanted to know if the budget would be sent for both years. Mr. Johnson said that it would.

Mr. Jackson wanted to know if the COVID-19 distribution could have been taken out of the Sheriff's CARES Act monies. Dr. Wilson said that he will look into it.

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 12:30 p.m.


Assistant Commission Clerk