

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION  
HELD ON JULY 14, 2020

The Caddo Parish Commission met in legal and special session on the above date at 12:30 p.m. in the Government Chambers, with President 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 Mr. Taliaferro, and Mr. Epperson led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CITIZENS COMMENTS**

Breka Peoples submitted the following statement:

Quite so often when we turn on our TV or when we look on social media we see police brutality start to look the new norm. From Anthony Childs, Mother's Day Brawl, to Tommie Mcglothen We seen firsthand how it can easily happen in our own back yard. This is why our citizens don't trust the police. Our citizens deserve to be safe by the very same ones who took an oath to serve and protect. Order to regain trust the officers must have honesty, transparency, alone with integrity. Three months ago, I was driving through District A and saw officer Jackson with their assault rifles intimidated the community. I ask Jackson what was his reason to have that out in front of the children. He couldn't answer Some of the rookies don't understand good policing because they were train to be bullies. I know what good police is because I was raised by two of the best officers at SPD. What I'm starting to see in the past 18 months is horrible? We need an outside investigation before any police reform. To make it better.

Tiffany Sanchez submitted the following statement:

Members of the Caddo Parish Commission and the Parish Attorney's Office, My name is Tiffany Sanchez. I am addressing you today via letter to give my account of how the Confederate monument located on the Caddo Courthouse grounds has affected my family in recent weeks. First, I'd like to share some background information as to why I feel inclined to write this letter. I was born into a low income and undereducated family. My father dropped out of high school to provide for his pregnant teen girlfriend and spent his career as a mechanic who would straggle with alcoholism, addiction, legal issues, domestic violence, and a string of five marriages and 4 children. My mother struggled as a single mother working at Libbey Glass and later marrying a local pastor, former marine, and business owner who would go on to abuse me physically, sexually, and emotionally. As a teen I had attempted suicide in order to escape my environment and underwent mental health treatment that saved my life, but didn't solve my problems. Soon after, I would run away from home and, upon capture, I was sent to a Christian reform school in Corpus Christi, Tx that I would later learn was a center of controversy over the legal obligation of the state to protect children from abuse and the Constitutional rights of Christians to operate child care facilities without a state license. I moved in with my father at the age of 16. Throughout several months I attended 4 highschools and lived in 6 households. The county assigned me a truancy officer, yet I only saw this person once. I was the victim of two rapes and multiple batteries. At the age of sixteen, I was held at gunpoint by a domestic partner and the police within a few months. Neither of them were due to my actions. Upon entering one highschool, the principal met me at the door, stated my last name as a question, and asked, "We're not going to have any problems, are we?" I was homeless and without an education or a driver's license when I moved back to Shreveport with an abusive and mentally ill boyfriend where I began working in multiple local venues and exotic dancing at the age of 18. When I was beaten by my boyfriend on one occasion, I called the local police and asked for resources, since I was now of legal age, to assist me in escaping the situation and pursuing a better life. I was told to save my money until I could find an apartment and leave him. I approached two other police officers downtown one night and asked again, "What can I do?" They told me that I was obviously not ready to leave him, or I would have already. Eventually, the bikers and criminals to which I had been exposed became involved and, not only provided a safe space for me, but also made a clear presence in my boyfriend's life that led to his leaving the state and my never seeing him again. Over the years, I married one of these men, had a child, received my GED and attended BPCC to compensate for my lack of education as a child. I've spent years in therapy to recover from the abuse, neglect, and trauma I experienced and have become an advocate for cult survivors, runaways, and victims of domestic violence, drug addiction, spiritual abuse, and sexual assault. I have spent countless hours teaching individuals how trauma affects the brain and body in order to give them more control over their lives. I've helped teens talk with their parents about the abuse they experience, because the state will not intervene unless bruises are present or a hospital visit is experienced. I've opened my home to individuals, so they can have a few weeks or months of stability to start a new life. I do this because the resources available are either over extended, nonexistent, or are abusive or negligent themselves and have lost the trust of those that need them. I cannot count how many times I have sat with a mother who is crying, because they cannot call the police on an abusive spouse. They know that, if they do, it will actually make the situation worse. This has been a national issue for longer than I have been alive, and I can't claim to have a solution to the problems of a broken system. I can, however, give the most recent account of when the system has, yet again, failed me. On June 13th, I had held my first session of what I called "Speaker's Corner." According to the event's page on Facebook it was "created to maintain peaceful dialog between citizens, artists, &community leaders. Profanity &threat of violence is strictly prohibited." The first session was slow and consisted of several people reading the Constitution together while discussing it. The second session,

Saturday, June 20th, had more people in attendance. I noticed an individual across the street recording us while he leaned against his truck. His name was Rex Dukes, a well known local Confederate enthusiast and demonstrator. I saw an opportunity for meaningful dialogue, and potential progress in healing the division in our city over the Confederate Monument. A local High School Civics teacher and I approached Mr. Dukes and requested he join us for a conversation about his views. We informed him that we welcome everyone's views and wished to hear everything he had to say. Upon his denial of our invitation, we again informed him that Speaker's Corner would be available at the same time every weekend should he change his mind. Later that day, he misunderstood an art demonstration performed during the permitted event. Due to his misunderstanding, Mr. Dukes made a phone call to several members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans who then showed up to "protect the monument." I and several others continue to peacefully engage in dialogue with the people who arrived under the false assertion that we were intending to harm the Confederate monument. We were surprised when multiple men arrived on the scene in an armed response to the calls they received from Mr. Dukes. At the end of the event, two members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans claimed to have a better understanding of what our event was and our intentions of creating a peaceful, meaningful, and needed dialogue in our community. Over the course of the following week, Rex Dukes with the help of the Gulf Coast Patriot Network, an organization he founded, made a call to action against our event to every Patriot Militia, Motorcycle Club, and Sons of Confederate Veterans member in the South. He referred to us as racists, "snotty nosed kids, and "Old f\*\*\*\*\* baggy titted women" who were "socialist marxist zombies" and needed an "apocalyptic" warning to leave the statue alone. He stated in his address that he had credible evidence we intended to establish an autonomous zone, topple the statue, and riot in Downtown Shreveport. This call to action was met by individuals who have organized groups and travel around the country to agitate protesters to violence. When I arrived around 11:30am to set up for our Noon event, I was met by 5 people surrounding the statue calling me names and referencing to the large amount of firearms across the street. Will James, the organizer of the event, immediately called the police. While trying to set up and observe our prayer ceremony before we began the "Speaker's Corner" session, my 15 year old son and I were constantly having armed individuals approach us with threats of violence, calling us all manner of vulgarities, and emasculating my son. They stated our presence on the sidewalk in front of the courthouse was permission for them to engage in this behaviour. While I tried to explain the misunderstandings of the situation, the police officers on scene watched as an armed man and woman screamed threats of violence at me and my son. The armed man, Kevin Brown, physically pushed me while I was standing with my hands folded in front of my body calmly telling the woman threatening me that I understood that she was coming from a place of pain and I respect her right to be heard. When Mr. Brown pushed me, I called out to the police officer. He said I should just walk away, and the officers on the scene continued to allow these acts of intimidation, humiliation, threats, and violence to occur on the public space of the sidewalk at 501 Texas St. As the next few hours progressed, a few dozen people arrived to attend our scheduled event. When met with acts of lewd and violent behaviour, the attendees also responded in gentle invitations to calmly have a discussion about the perceived intentions of this event and why they felt the way they did. Multiple people approached the Shreveport Police Officers requesting an explanation of when they would intervene and preserve the peacefulness of this event. All of us were told that they would not deny someone's freedom of speech. When we explained that we were asking for them to keep people from breaking the law and we were concerned about the safety of the individuals attending, we were met with shrugs and indecisive double talk. We began livestreaming the event on Facebook as our last means of protecting our life, and possibly legacy, should things become even more escalated. When the community of Shreveport saw the way police allowed these criminal acts against unarmed women and children, private citizens arrived to open carry and act as a deterrent from further violence. It is my belief that the actions of those citizens saved the lives of my son and I, as the police were charged with a task they did not fulfill. I cannot speak for anyone who attended the event other than my son and I. What I am about to state, I mean with all sincerity and with the weight of my past that I shared with you at the beginning of this letter: The past two weeks, my son and I have alternated between sleepless nights and nights plagued by the dreams of holding each other as one of us died by a gunshot wound inflicted by the people Rex Dukes brought to Shreveport. We have moments of stillness that are interrupted by sudden tears and panic because we know that anyone who viewed the livestreams of the people he brought might recognize us and may kill us in a parking lot, follow us home, or terrorize us the way they did Downtown. I've had conversations with my son, who's planning on joining the fire academy when he comes of age, in which he explains that he was prepared to die that day in order to protect me from them. Going to the grocery store is an overstimulating experience of expecting to see the faces of the people who were ready to kill us a few days before and the police who refused to protect us. My body is exhausted and in pain. My time has been dedicated to gathering footage from the event, in order to secure prosecution for the crimes committed that day, and trying to console my son whom, for the first time, had no interest in attending a fireworks display on the Fourth of July. He told me they sound too much like gunfire. I spent hours on my Facebook livestream video responding respectfully to the comments of people supporting those who attacked us, again, pushing the mission to peacefully engage in dialogue. This meant apologizing for an emotional plea I made with the Sons of Confederate Veterans present that day. I begged them to intervene and denounce the actions of the agitators. I had hoped it would get them to stop and, in all sincerity, save our life that day. Even when they did approach our microphone and denounce their actions, the agitators continued. I attempted again, after the event, to request members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, an organization from which my father has a pedigree and my son would be a rightful member should he apply, meet with me to form a statement condemning the actions of the outside agitators that day. These requests were met with threats of legal action being taken against me for slander. On July 4th, I arrived at the police station to file my report. I had taken a full week to gather all the video evidence I felt was necessary to prove the crimes that had taken place as well as evidence for the others who had experienced batteries the same day. I contacted Officer Whilwhite who alerted the desk sergeant that I would be arriving. When I introduced

myself, he called an officer to take my report and, while we waited, proceeded to question why I was there, and what I was protesting. He then began cursing and shoving paperwork around the desk because, as he stated, "I'm not even supposed to be at a desk, I'm supposed to be on patrol." Thankfully, my husband was present with me during all of this as I had a panic attack in the station while trying to make a report. When the officer taking my report arrived, he listened to my report sympathetically, but made several statements about how these individuals knew the law, and most of the charges wouldn't "hold up in court." He never offered for me to give a statement, and I later learned from the investigator that many of the crimes I reported were not included in the officer's report. I had asked several times for someone with the police department to go over the footage with me, so I could know what I can press charges against. No one has. Yesterday, I received an email from the investigator on my case stating our appointment to review footage on the 14th was no longer necessary. As an advocate and survivor, I understand the system is broken and no one individual can repair the overwhelming gaps in our public services. I also understand that we have to start somewhere. The removal of the monument was never my goal. I didn't fully understand why it was such an important task until June 27th, 2020. That was a day that will permanently impact the life of my son and myself. We sought understanding and to provide healing in our community, but we were met with violence and abandonment. The fact that the statue was the focus of the conflict crippled the police from taking action against armed individuals from outside the city bringing threats and violence against the peaceful citizens of your community. If any of the patrons of Downtown Shreveport had done the same, we would have been arrested outside a restaurant or bar on site. June 27th was the day I learned that the Confederate Statue, located on the Caddo Courthouse Grounds, was a definite inhibitor of equal justice for the citizens of Caddo Parish regardless of race, religion, or gender.

Wade Lovelace submitted the following statement:

I, Wade Lovelace, am submitting this letter with deep concern for the safety of not only myself but for those that support our company. Love Shreveport-Bossier has a reputation of being organized and peaceful at all of our protests. We have been a part of every protest for the past 45 days with No Arrest, No Riots & No Looting. After the actions of counter protesters on Saturday, June 27, that were allowed to come into our city and not only threaten, but allowed to assault some of our peaceful protestors, we no longer feel safe to protest. We are upset at the actions of the Louisiana State Troopers and the SPD on how they handled the situations of said date. We are asking that the Confederate Monument be moved to help de-escalate the situation or to cover it immediately. Any other actions are not acceptable at this point. Sincerely, Wade J. Lovelace (Founder of Love Shreveport-Bossier)

Dr. Will James called in and submitted the following comment:

Thank you all for the time me to speak today. I just wanted to make a short statement. I'm actually the lead organizer for the peaceful demonstrations that have been occurring at the courthouse, not just for the past couple of months for several years myself. I recognize all the words that everyone before me has done, and also recognized the work that everyone is doing up to today. I wanted to speak on that with the events that occurred on the 27th of June, where we had a peaceful demonstration, and I do respect everyone's right to bear arms but when you're bearing arms and standing over peaceful protestors cursing at them calling them derogatory terms using racial slurs. And then also, shoving, pushing, chest checking and so on and so forth with peaceful protestors. I'm concerned, not just with those moments that happened. I was concerned and it has been raised already with the police chief but I feel, I feel more needs to be done, because with the fact that we have officers certain sergeants and lieutenants that were standing idly by while people were being shoved and pushed and being threatened. We have a young man and a 15 year old who was told that you need to stay down on the ground or they're going to knock him back down. And that's putting it politely. Not to mention what the verbal threats and the minimal physical contact at them but also, I'm sure the council and the parish is aware of the threats that were made through online live videos. And with the threats of snipers that will be not just in adjacent buildings but also in the courthouse. I'm really concerned about the safety not just with any protestors that may come to attend whether you're a protester or counter protestors are more concerned about passersby that have nothing to do with a monument. If you have a grandma or grandpa, that are playing Pokémon Go. Someone drops a pistol. The weapon is not on safety and around those often takes up grandma or grandpa, or grandchild. I feel something needs to be done to expedite either the removal of the monument or the least case scenario to cover it up. That way, we can see that some kind of action is being done that the people's voices are being heard and to prevent anything terrible from happening as far as the physical nature. The protestors are innocent citizens that are in the area. Thank you so much for your time.

The Clerk of the Commission advised that there were three public comments submitted unanimously. Attorney Frazier stated that there is not a provision in the By-Laws regarding this, however, she advised that the comments be submitted as part of the public record.

I did not feel safe at the protest due to counterprotesters walking across the streets with guns as a form of intimidation and their violent and temperament. There were several instances where counter protestors yelled hateful and hurtful things at myself and others (some which were children) and rather than SPD discourage them from agitating us, myself and a volunteer had to break up heated moments. Especially because whenever we attempted to cross the street, SPD was ready to engage but did not have the same enthusiasm the other way around.

To whom it may concern, I am writing in order to make my voice be heard and my emotions heard. There has been much unrest in the City of Shreveport over last month or so. I have participated in a number of peaceful protest and other demonstrations to express my disdain for the current policies and laws or lack thereof in our city and country. I have been born and raised in Shreveport. It is home. I have an undeniable love for for it culture and people. However, it would be an understatement to fail to acknowledge the corruption that has ravaged Shreveport. I feel unsafe as a participants in demonstrations demanding justice for police brutality. The officers that are out in place to protect me are familiar faces I too often see making openly demeaning remarks about what is happening to the black community. There is very little trust there if I'm being open and honest. The fact that this letter has been written anonymously should show just how serious this matter is. My hope is that this does not fall on deaf ears. This is plea to our elected officials to handle this matter with the utmost integrity and importance. Please allow an independent investigation for the safety and future trust of Shreveport.

To Whom It Concerns: I am one of the lead organizers for a few of the events/demonstrations that have taken place in our City of Shreveport. It is our right to peacefully protest/march. However, I am concerned for the safety of our citizens when we gather outside of the courthouse to protest over statues and anything else that has to do with ALL BLACK LIFE. We as organizers do not want any casualties. We are currently speaking out on national post-modern lynching murder cases. However, We are also bringing awareness to local post modern lynchings due to police brutality and addressing malfeasance of office. If there are internal investigations being conducted then there will be tension. We do not know who to trust. We are also receiving random dirty messages from counter protesters on social media attempting to cyber terrorize us. They have pictures of organizers and other protesters. TARGETING US. If these people show up then they should not be allowed to step across the street with peaceful protesters. (That is why we apply for permits so that we have the space to voice concerns.) If they get in the face of a citizen or touch them then that would not be good. SPD needs to make sure counter protesters stay across the street. Trust is a determining factor when it comes to our public safety. We are out here fighting for basic human rights. Local citizens need to know that if counter-protesters show up at the courthouse then they have that right. The police SHOULD NOT not just stand around. There are drones flying around the courthouse when we gather. There are people standing on top of buildings that are snipers. Who sent the snippers? Did counter protesters or someone in our local office send them? At the end of the day that Confederate statue needs to come down! We have been patient. Other cities across the country have knocked them down or they have been removed overnight. It's the symbolism of white supremacy. We will continue to fight domestic terrorism and white supremacy everywhere!

#### **CERTIFICATE OF TELECONFERENCE**

WHEREAS, the Governor of the State of Louisiana has issued Proclamation Number 33 JBE 2020, stating that, due to the current Public Health emergency declared in the Governor's Proclamation Number 25 JBE 2020, and citing the provisions of La. R.S. 29:721, et seq., granting him the authority to control the "ingress and egress to and from a disaster, the movement of persons within the area, and the occupancy of premises therein; and,

WHEREAS, the Governor, in Proclamation Number 33 JBE 2020, has limited all gatherings of 10 or more people, for public safety purposes; and,

WHEREAS, Governor has issued a general stay at home order "unless performing an essential activity," 33 JBE 2020, Section 3; and,

WHEREAS, attendance at a Caddo Parish Commission Special Session meeting is not stated in the list of essential activities, listed in 33 JBE 2020, Section 3; and,

WHEREAS, the usual conduct of the meeting would require travel and the presence of a number of persons in excess of ten (10); and,

WHEREAS, the Governor of the State, in Proclamation Number 30 JBE 2020, Section 4, issued on March 16, 2020, has invoked the aforementioned statutes authorizing him to allow attendance at essential governmental meetings via teleconference or video conference during the pendency of this emergency; and,

THEREFORE, the Caddo Parish Commission hereby certifies that it will not be able to obtain a quorum and convene a meeting in a public forum on July 14, 2020 due to the Governor's proclamations, and will be required to meet by video conference, and, if necessary teleconference, on that date as allowed by law and the Proclamations of the Governor listed above.

Date: July 13, 2020

/s/Mario Chavez Caddo  
Parish Commission President

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

The Clerk of the Commission stated that the first new business item on the agenda was, *discussion/action relative to public safety at the Caddo Parish Courthouse and within the 500 block of Texas Street.*

It was **moved by Mrs. Gage-Watts**, seconded by Mr. Chavez, *to direct Dr. Wilson construct a protective barrier around the Confederate Monument by Friday.*

She would like a box constructed around the monument to reduce tension among the protestors and to protect the sculpture from damage. She further explained that the box could be 15-20 feet tall. The plywood on the monument should be painted for a more aesthetic appeal, either white or blue. She also suggested that each side of the plywood should have a flag made of self-adhering vinyl. The north side should be the United States of America flag; the south side should be the Louisiana State flag; the east side should be the City of Shreveport; and the west should be the Parish of Caddo.

Mr. Chavez agreed with Mrs. Gage-Watts and feels that a structure be built to reduce tension and protect the sculpture. He commended Mrs. Gage-Watts on her motion.

Mr. Jackson wanted to ensure that this structure would not stop the monument from being moved. Mr. Chavez does not believe this would stop it. He said "the course has been set. We are just waiting for the judge to rule his verdict". Dr. Wilson also said that they have clear directions from the Commissioners to move the statue.

Mr. Cawthorne asked that Dr. Wilson repeat his statement. Dr. Wilson stated, "we have clear directions from the Board to get the statue moved at the appropriate time."

Mr. Cawthorne wanted to know when the box would be constructed. Mrs. Gage-Watts said that she would like it to be built by Friday.

Dr. Wilson said that they will try to have the box constructed as expeditiously as possible, but it may not happen by Friday due to the artistry work the Commission would like. Mrs. Gage-Watts said that she has a company that the Parish already uses that could provide the flags by Friday.

Mr. Taliaferro suggested that a press release be sent out regarding what the structure will look like.

**Call for the Question by Mr. Johnson**, seconded by Mr. Chavez. 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).

At this time, Mrs. Gage-Watts' motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cawthorne, Chavez, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Jackson, Johnson, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (11). NAYS: Commissioner Hopkins (1). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Jackson**, seconded by Mr. Epperson, *to amend Ordinance No. 5962 of 2020 and otherwise providing with respect thereto.*

Mr. Atkins said that he is not in favor of Ordinance No. 5962 of 2020, but feels that this amendment is an improvement to that ordinance.

Mr. Epperson pointed out that the USS Roosevelt had to be docked due to 1,500 sailors being in contact with the coronavirus.

Mr. Burrell said that the coronavirus is serious and should be taken seriously.

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, Jackson, Johnson, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (11). NAYS: Commissioner Hopkins (1). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

#### **ORDINANCE NO. 5962 OF 2020**

BY THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION:

AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NUMBER 5962 OF 2020 RELATIVE TO MASK WEARING IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19, TO CHANGE THE AGE AT WHICH MASKS MUST BE WORN, AND TO OTHERWISE PROVIDE WITH RESPECT THERETO.

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission adopts the recitals of Ordinance No. 5962 of 2020;

WHEREAS, Governor John Bel Edwards has issued Proclamation Number 89 JBE 2020 mandating mask wearing state-wide;

WHEREAS, that proclamation mandates mask wearing for children ages eight and above while strongly encouraging mask wearing for children between the ages of two and seven years of age;

WHEREAS, Ordinance No. 5962 mandated children ages two years and older to wear masks;

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission believes it appropriate to adjust the age provision of Ordinance No. 5962; and

WHEREAS, the need for said action is immediate and necessary;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Caddo Parish Commission in due, legal and regular session convened, that Ordinance No. 5962 is hereby amended to change the age requirement from two years of age to eight years of age by amending Subparagraph C.1. to read as follows:

**“C. Exemptions – Facial Coverings Not Required.**

Facial coverings are not required for the following persons:

1. Children under ~~two (2)~~ eight (8) years of age and any child while under the custody of a licensed childcare facility, including daycare centers;

\* \* \* \* \*

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. Epperson**, seconded by Mr. Chavez, *that the Commission convene into Executive Session to discuss matters relative to Case Number 620,773-B, First Judicial District Court. Motion carried*, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cawthorne, Chavez, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Johnson, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (11). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Jackson (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

There being no further business to come before the body, the meeting was adjourned.

  
Michelle Nations  
Deputy Commission Clerk

  
Mario Chavez  
President