The Caddo Parish Economic Development Committee met in legal session on the above
date, at 2:00 p.m., via teleconference, with Mr. John E. Atkins, Chairman, presiding, and the following
members in attendance: Commissioners Atkins, Chavez, and Young (3). ABSENT: Commissioners
Epperson and Gage-Watts (2).

Also, in attendance were Assistant Administrator Erica Bryant, Parish Attorney Donna
Frazier, Finance Director Hayley Barnett, and Commissioner Hopkins.

The invocation was given by Mr. Chavez, and Mr. Young led the Committee 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: September 28, 2020

/s/ John E. Atkins
Committee Chair

Mr. Atkins welcomed everyone to today’s meeting and stated that the Committee will be discussing the following item:

- Review Ordinance No. 5981 of 2020, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Capital Outlay Fund and the Oil & Gas Fund to provide an appropriation for the construction and improvement of Blanchard water lines that serve unincorporated areas within Caddo Parish and the Bel-Di-Gil Water System, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto

Mr. Atkins said that the main purpose for this meeting is to get additional input on this project and decide whether this Committee would like to forward this ordinance to the full body for the Commission’s consideration.

Mr. Hopkins explained that this project is to upsize Blanchard’s water system. He said that they are taking over the Bel-Di-Gil Water System. This is an opportunity for the Commission to be a part of extending the water lines for the future along I-49 and Hwy 3049 to Ida. He said that this project will allow the rural citizens to have a roundabout service that goes to Blanchard, over to Bel-Di-Gil, through Mooringsport, through Oil City, and back to Blanchard. Mr. Hopkins also mentioned that this has been in the works for 15 years now. He believes that this will be an economic development opportunity because there will be a water supply to support residential and commercial development. He asked that the Committee members support this project.

Mayor Galambos, Blanchard Mayor, explained that Blanchard has an opportunity to be able to get a water system through a forgivable loan program from the LDH. They have been approved for $2.3M from the State as a base price. They are requesting from the Commission up sizing the line between Blanchard and Belcher. He said that this would enable economic growth in either residential developments and/or retail stores. Mayor Galambos said that they receive the bid results back and have lowered their request from the Parish to $989,645, which includes a 10% for any type of incidentals that they may need for construction.
He also mentioned that Blanchard will start the project in mid-November. Mr. Atkins wanted to know if the project would continue without the Commission’s support. Mayor Galambos said that they will be installing smaller diameter lines regardless. Currently, they have an 8-inch line in Alternate 1, but would like to increase it to a 12-inch line. In Alternate 2, they are going from a 12-inch line to a 16-inch line. Mr. Atkins clarified that the current proposal, without the upsizing of the lines, would meet the current demand, but the upsizing would provide for the ability for future growth. Mayor Galambos agreed.

Answering a question from Mr. Young regarding Blanchard’s water source, Mayor Galambos said that they draw water from Caddo Lake and is rain fed.

He then wanted to know if this project would take everyone in North Caddo off of wells and put them on reservoirs of Caddo Lake. Mayor Galambos said that it would take the 325 connections to Bel-Di-Gil off of well water.

Mr. Young said that he is concerned with taking citizens out of the City or other districts and moving them to North Caddo. He said that is not economic growth. Mayor Galambos said that Blanchard is growing and will continue to grow. He said that there are three subdivision currently under construction and estimated approximately 300 new homes being built within the next three to five years. Mr. Young wanted to know if those citizens were coming from within Caddo or elsewhere. Mayor Galambos said that some of the residents are coming from Shreveport, Bossier, etc. Mr. Young suggested advertising to Texas residents to move to Caddo Parish.

Mr. Young wanted to know if there were certain criteria that had to be met in order for the loan to be forgiven. Mayor Galambos said that Blanchard had to meet 10 of the criteria and exceeded them. He also explained that Blanchard was the only small town that has gone to the Bond Commission and has been approved for the total amount of the loan, which is $3.7M.

Dr. Ward said that a study was conducted 2012 regarding water. It looked at this whole region, Caddo, Bossier, Webster, etc. They found that Caddo Parish has a quality water source in Caddo Lake. Caddo Parish also determined that they did not want to be in the water business, but wanted someone else to provide water to the residents. He said that this opportunity allows for larger lines from a surface water source with someone who wants to be in the business of selling water. He said that the water would be of a sufficient size to push water up through Hosston to Ida and possibly over to Rodessa. The water study conducted in 2012 matches the option picked “almost to the tee”. Dr. Ward also said that this would allow the Parish to leverage funds without spending the full amount. He believes that this is a great opportunity for Caddo Parish.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know if the Parish would recoup its investment through property taxes down the road, or if there would be another way for the Parish to recoup its funds. Dr. Ward said that in the past, a cooperative endeavor agreement (CEA) would be drafted to include an economic benefit study. The Oil City/Vivian project is lagging, but Dr. Ward believes that this project would also jump start that project.

Mr. Young asked for more clarification regarding the Oil City/Vivian Project. Dr. Ward said that in 2013, the Parish upsized lines in Oil City along Hwy 530 and in the Town of Vivian along Hwy 170. He said that they pushed water lines out to the I-49 Corridor and enlarged them. He said that the residents along those areas are no longer on wells and are able to get high quality drinking water that is fed from a groundwater source. The cost for the project was approximately $700,000.

Mr. Young wanted to know if those water systems were connected to Caddo Lake. Dr. Ward said that they are, but have their own treatment plants.

Dr. Ward also mentioned that Caddo Parish has about 100 million gallons of water per day from Caddo Lake. He said that Marshall and Jefferson have been able to capture some of this water, but Louisiana has 100 million gallons of water per day that belongs to Louisiana.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know if there have been any issues with the aquifer in North Caddo like they’ve had with the aquifer in South Caddo. Dr. Ward explained that Caddo Parish has two aquifers: Carrizo-Wilcox in the South and the Red River Alluvial in the North. He said that Bel-Di-Gil, Hosston, and Ida tap off of the Red River Alluvial. This water has a red tint to it because it is watershed off of the Red River. It is good for agriculture, but not good for potable water. It has to be treated first.

Dr. Wilson believes that this is a good project. He said that in 2005, they were looking to build two different water plants in Caddo. The approximate costs for those water plants was $25 million, not including the distribution lines. He said that this project is more cost-efficient.

Mr. Young wanted to know if the economic impact study would consider growth to be new residents to Caddo Parish or if relocation of current Caddo citizens would be included. Dr. Ward said that they are looking at growth along the water lines. Mr. Young reiterated that it is not growth if a citizen moves from within the Parish to the North. Mr. Hopkins said that it is better to keep citizens in Caddo rather than them moving out of the Parish.

It was moved by Mr. Chavez, seconded by Mr. Atkins, to recommend to the full body an appropriation of up to $990,000 for the construction and improvement of Blanchard water lines that serve North Caddo.
unincorporated areas within Caddo Parish and the Bel-Di-Gil Water System along with an economic impact study. Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Chavez, and Young (3). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioners Epperson and Gage-Watts (2). ABSTAIN: None (0).

There be no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned.

Michelle Nations
Assistant Commission Clerk