

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICE JURY OF THE PARISH OF NATCHITOCHEs,
STATE OF LOUISIANA, TAKEN A REGULAR MEETING HELD, MONDAY,

June 21, 2010

5:00 P. M.

The Police Jury of the Parish of Natchitoches, State of Louisiana, met in regular and legal session in the Police Jury Board Room of the Natchitoches Parish Courthouse, on Monday, June 21, 2010 at five o'clock (5:00) p.m.

The Invocation was given by Juror Stoker, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Juror Charles Huggins.

There were present: The Honorable President Fred Jacobs, Police Jurors: Gerald Longlois, J. D. Garrett, David Dollar, William Hymes, Charles Huggins, Johnny Martin, Tom Collier, Jessie Hoffpauir, and Mimi Stoker.

There was absent: Chris Paige.

Staff Present: Parish Administrator Catherine Hamilton, Corrine Young, Debbie Miley, Greg Lemoine, Sharon Harris, Judie Barnum, Beverly Washington, Izeola Charles, Earl Townsend, Penny Niette and Assistant District Attorney Billy Joe Harrington.

The Police Jury of the Parish of Natchitoches was then convened as the governing authority of said parish by the President who stated that the Police Jury was ready for the transaction of business.

On motion by Mr. Longlois, duly seconded by Mr. Dollar, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby adopt the minutes of the Work Session/Regular meeting held Monday, May 17, 2010.

Motion Carried

President Jacobs then recognized Mr. Dollar who stated that the Jury had recently adopted an animal ordinance with a whole lot of help from other agencies. Mr. Dollar stated that as they move forward with this issue, the Jury should pay their part. Mr. Dollar also stated that once the Jury got the District Attorney's and Attorney General's approval he thought it would be beneficial to pay a share of the cost involved in getting the animals to the shelter. He then stated that at the last meeting, Mr. Paige asked him to get some better figures in the cost of the operation. Mr. Dollar went on to say that he had spoken with City's Finance Director on the current budget for the City Animal Shelter. He told the Jury that the City's cost of animal control is a little over \$153,900.00. Mr. Dollar stated that he would like to get at least half of that to split the cost but he did not think the \$75,000 dollars is realist figure with some of the things the Jury was facing tonight. He then stated that he would like to allocate \$25,000.00 and established an cooperative endeavor agreement with the City and Sheriff. Mr. Dollar concluded by stating that the Jury did not have to pay anything until the agreement is in place. Relative to this, the following action was taken:

On motion by Mr. Garrett, duly seconded by Mr. Collier, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby amend the Health Unit Budget to pay for rabies and animal control in the amount of \$25,000.00.

Motion Carried

On motion by Mr. Dollar, duly seconded by Mr. Hymes, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby appoint Mr. John Pluckett to the Natchitoches Parish Tourist Commission for a three-year period.

Motion Carried

On motion by Mr. Collier, duly seconded by Mr. Hoffpauir, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby start the process to appoint/reappoint someone to the Natchitoches Parish Port Commission, due to Mr. Ralph Ingram's term expiring.

Motion Carried

On motion by Mr. Hymes, duly seconded by Mr. Collier, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby start the process to appoint members to the Natchitoches Parish Tourist Commission, due to Mrs. Theresa Gibson resigning and Mr. Jay Sharplin's term expiring.

Motion Carried

On motion by Mr. Hymes, duly seconded by Mr. Garrett, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby appoint the Natchitoches Times as the official journal of the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury for the period July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011.

Motion Carried

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On motion by Mr. Hymes, duly seconded by Mr. Dollar, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby accept the report of the Office of Community Services/Head Start Program.

Motion Carried

On motion by Mr. Hymes, duly seconded by Mr. Longlois, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby designate the NPPJ Office of Community Services as the official public agency to administer funds to the poor and necessitous and authorize the President of the Jury to sign any and all contracts, reports, requests for funds, and,/or any other documents necessary to provide the above services on behalf of the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury.

Motion Carried

President Jacobs then recognized Ms. Debbie Miley, Parish Treasurer, who told the Jury that the Exhibit #5 that they received in their meeting notice packet last week was no good. She stated that she wanted to go about it a different way. She then stated that the deficit total for General Fund was \$531,000.00. Ms. Miley also told the Jury that the General Fund has \$475,000 in Fund 001 and the payroll liability had \$209,000 and the Criminal Court as of the May 30th had a \$203,000 deficit. Both Weatherization and rural transit still have the same deficit 121,142.40. Which left us a cash balance of 455,000. Ms. Miley then stated that if you take the entire OCS and Head start deficit off, General Fund would only have \$23,146.12 as of the 31st of May. She then stated that once she rolled over the funds General Fund will no longer have \$23,000.00 and would be in a deficit. The Planning Fund is now in a deficit, so she would have to cover it along with the Criminal Court Fund and the OCS grants. Ms. Miley then told the Jury that she had given them a handout showing the administration, Jurors and planning salary coming out of other funds to try and relieve the general fund throughout the year. She stated that the funds involved are general fund, highway, government building, health unit, library and summer youth and would cover 5 months effective with the July 1 check. She stated that she had done a four-month and a five-month plan so they could see both. Ms. Miley then stated that with the plan she was presenting they could relieve the general fund in 4 months period in the amount of \$87,330.36 and \$114,452.11 in a five-month period. She then stated that in order not to overcome the funds she splitted the funds to give everyone something from each. She also told the Jury that there are some salaries that the Jury is legally responsible for and the Criminal Court salaries are one. Ms. Miley went on to say that she had done line items that the Jury will need to vote on to be paid. She then stated that she will be going over the money and will ask them to make a motion to say what to pay and come July 1st we pay no one. Ms. Miley also stated that now is the time where everyone needs to know what is happening because this is something that has never happen before. The General Fund does not have money. President Jacobs then recognized Mr. Hoffpauir who stated that the jury has been told this over and over. He stated that he knew this was going to happen if the Jury kept paying 100% of the bill that the Sheriff sends the Jury and that sooner or later all the money was going to be gone. Mr. Hoffpauir then stated that he had asked this Jury to talk about it and if we did not have enough to pay the Sheriff pay half of what the bill is every month and not wait to the month when you the Jury have nothing left. Mr. Dollar then asked Mrs. Hamilton and Ms. Miley if the auditor had any input on this situation? Mrs. Catherine stated that in a conversation with them they gave some suggestions of things the Jury could try. Mrs. Hamilton told the Jury that most of the things they suggested had already been tried.

Ms. Miley then stated that if you look at the whole picture and take all this into consideration, the General Fund will still be in a deficit of approximately \$96,355.00, even if the Jury do this. She also told the Jury that they would only be paying payroll, telephone, and copier cost and will happen only if the Jury get the revenue each month based on last year funds. Ms. Miley then stated that she needed something in the minutes to say that it is ok for her to pay these things. Mr. Hoffpauir told the Jury that they could not do deficit spending because that is what the state law states. Mr. Hymes then stated that the law also states that the Jury had to pay the unfunded mandates coming from Baton Rouge but if there is no money the state is basely taxing itself. Mr. Hoffpauir also stated that if the Jury is going to disobey what the law state, he would much rather disobey the law that sends hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Sheriff's Office. He also stated that if the Jury would stay according to the law, they would not going to be able to do it all. The Jury will have to choose what they are going to do. Assistant District Attorney Billy Jo Harrington told the Jury that in talking to Van, the District Attorney, he thought this would work as long as the Administration Office is doing work for each one of the separate departments. In other words, you could shift some of the funds around to pay administration fees and it would be legal to do that.

Mr. Dollar then stated that he, Mr. Hoffpauir and Mr. Hymes agree in this respect that they all are right and wrong and this started about 25 years ago. Mr. Dollar stated that the Jury has no new income and a ton of new bills. He stated that the Jury is mandated to do everything that is on this printout. Mr. Dollar also told the Jury that the taxpayers have told the Jury that they did not want to help this body at least once and maybe several times. He stated that now the Jury is going to have to choose whom they are going to listen to and thought the only choice to choose is to accept the proposal of the salaries allocations. Mr. Dollar then stated that the Jury was not be solving any problems but was just kicking the can down the road. The Judges, District Attorney and the Sheriff all know what is going on. He then stated that he would like to make the Parish Treasurer's exhibit a part of the minutes. After a lengthy discussion, the following action was taken:

On motion by Mr. Dollar, duly seconded by Mr. Longlois, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby revise the General Fund, Health Unit, Road Maintenance Fund, the Planning Commission Fund, Library Fund, Government Building Fund and the Summer Youth Program Fund of the 2010 Natchitoches Parish Police Jury Budget.

Motion Carried
With
Mr. Hoffpauir
"Opposing"

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On motion by Mr. Dollar, duly seconded by Mr. Garrett, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby accept the Report of the Treasurer.

Motion Carried

President Jacobs then recognized Mr. Dollar to discuss the selling of the Hospital. Mr. Dollar told the Jury that he thought the Jury understood why this should be done. He stated that there was no end point in sight nor did he have a place down the road that the Jury was going to be bailed out. Mr. Dollar also stated that he did find out until several years later, the Jury was still unable to work out an agreement with the hospital. Based on not being able to do so, he would like for this body to at least start the process to see what other things could be done. He stated that the Jury is doing this with the shooting range and with the building on MLK. Mr. Dollar went on to say that the Jury have assets and did not have too many choices right now. He felt the Jury should take a look at selling the hospital. President Jacobs then asked Mrs. Stoker to explain why the hospital could not give the Jury the \$150,000.00. Mrs. Stoker then stated that the hospital have some of the financially woes as everyone else. She stated that the hospital was seeing a decline in revenues and has to lay off people. Mrs. Stoker also stated that with the new health care, not all of the new health care laws are in place and some companies with insurance coverage have changed so they are seeing a decline in their revenues. Mrs. Stoker went on to say that the hospital have some rather large capital investments that must be made in the next few months and they could not do that financially. That is why they withdrew the contract and is still willing to work with the Jury. She then told the Jury that the Hospital had completed the purchase of a van for the coroner. Mr. Dollar told the Jury that he was not mad at anyone about taking that money back. They have a hospital to run and it just happen to be that this board and Christi Schumpert has been housed in a public building, rent and lease free since the 1950's and 1970's. They have made some wonderful improvements. He then stated that the Jury has assets and they have assets and thought each of them could meet somewhere in the middle to see what the Jury needs to do. Relative to this, the following action was taken:

On motion by Mr. Dollar, duly seconded by Mr. Garrett, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby start the process to review the possibility of selling the Natchitoches Parish Hospital.

Motion Carried
With
Mrs. Stoker
"opposing"

President Jacobs then recognized Mr. Longlois to discuss downsizing the Police Jury to seven members. Mr. Longlois told the Jury that one of the biggest talks in the parish is that they would love to see the Jury down size. Mr. Longlois then stated that this has been brought up in the past and after doing research on down sizing he thought it should be brought up again. He also told the Jury that if the general public say they want the Jury to down size, the Jury should do what the general public wants.

President Jacobs then recognized Mr. Hymes who stated that Reapportionment is right around the corner and after reapportionment was done he would entertain the thought. Mr. Dollar then stated that there was a lot of questions asked when he, the President and Vice-president had a meeting with the City's Mayor. He stated that an agreement with the city and the parish could better serve the parish. Mr. Dollar also told the Jury that the mayor wants to get a City/Parish Committee together to work through things. Mr. Longlois then told the Jury that the process to start the downsizing would entail having a plan drawn up to redraw the lines. Mr. Huggins asked the Jury if they remember when they had done this the last time. There were 3 districts that were not touched 2,3 and 5. He stated that his district and district 1 would have been combine so district one changed his vote because he found out he was going to run against me. He stated that the Juror did not call him and ask if he was going to run again, because he would have step down. Instead he just changed his vote. Mr. Huggins also stated that the Jury had already paid \$8,500 dollars to have the lines redrawn. He then told the Jury that they were not the school board but the police jury and not to worry about what the school board does just what the police jury do. Mr. Huggins went on to say that they should have changed at that time but they did not because of one vote. If the Jury do something here tonight and do not put something in there that it take 100% of the jury to change our vote a month before Jurors go out of office they would vote it down. The Jury paid the money and had the lines drawn and the only districts that did was not hurt were 2, 3, 5. Mr. Longlois then told the Jury he would go and talk to the school board but he did not think it matter. He stated that the Jury is working for the people in the parish and not for the school Board. Mr. Longlois concluded by saying that the Jury need to take the parish view in consideration because the Jury have been waiting for a long time to get out of this hole and they owe it to the people in the parish. Relative to this, the following action was taken:

On motion by Mr. Longlois, duly seconded by Mr. Dollar, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby table approving the downsizing of the Police Jury from eleven (11) members to seven (7) members.

Motion Carried

President Jacobs then recognized Mr. Longlois to discuss calling a 1 1/2% sales tax. Mr. Longlois told the Jury he would love for someone to find the money rather than putting a tax on the ballot. Mr. Hoffpauir stated that he would too but they were not going to find it. He stated that the Jury was going to spend a lot of money putting this on the ballot and it is money that the Jury should not spend because the tax is not going to pass. Mr. Hoffpauir also stated that the Jury could put it on the ballot every week and the people are not going to vote for it because they do not want anymore taxes. He went on to say that right now is a bad time for taxes anyway and the people out there are having a hard time right now.

The tax is not what people want to see. Mr. Hoffpauir concluded his remarks by saying when you renew the garbage tax and put a sales tax on there with it you have a real big chance that you want even get the garbage tax passed. Mr. Longlois then asked where do you think the money come from in the first place? It comes from taxes and it has not been raised since we have been in office. It has got to be done now or it is not going to last. Mr. Dollar then stated that he agreed with Jessie that this is not a good time for a tax but it is not a good time to shut down the courthouse. This is not something that we are doing to the taxpayers we are doing it for the taxpayers. Mr. Hoffpauir asked if you put it on the ballot now, you are not going to collect it before next year. If the problem is coming it does matter if you pass the tax or not. Mr. Dollar stated that most of the jury function would be shut down, such as the Criminal Court, this building, criminal activity, Judges and the District Attorney. This is the most serious issue that we will face around the table. I don't like taxes but I will support this 100%. Mr. Hoffpauir then stated that if we are faced with passing a tax or walking, then let us walk because a tax is not going to pass. After a lengthy discussion, the following action was taken:

On motion by Mr. Longlois, duly seconded by Mr. Dollar, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby approve the calling of an election for a 1/2% sales tax for the public safety of all the citizens of Natchitoches Parish.

On a roll call vote, the vote thereon was as follows:

YES: Longlois, Garrett, Dollar, Huggins, Martin, Collier and Jacobs.

NO: Hymes, Hoffpauir and Stoker.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: Paige.

With the vote being seven (7) for and three (3) against, the motion to call an election for a 1/2% sales tax passed.

Motion Carried

On motion by Mr. Dollar, duly seconded by Mr. Hymes, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby adopt resolutions to allocate portions of salaries of Administrative employees of the Police Jury to varies funds including Health Unit, Government Building, Library, Road Maintenance and the Summer Youth Program.

Motion Carried
With
Mr. Hoffpauir
"Opposing"

On motion by Mr. Dollar, duly seconded by Mr. Longlois, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby adopt a resolution to allocate portions of salaries for the Jurors to various funds including Health Unit, Government Building, Library and Road Maintenance.

Motion Carried
With
Mr. Hoffpauir
"Opposing"

On motion by Mr. Dollar, duly seconded by Mr. Hymes, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby table moving the Planning Commission Office under the Road Maintenance Department on a temporary basis.

Motion Carried

On motion by Mr. Dollar, duly seconded by Mr. Longlois, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby table removing the management of the Head Start Program from under the Police Jury Office of Community Services to the direct supervision and control of the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury.

Motion Carried

On motion by Mrs. Stoker, duly seconded by Mr. Garrett, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby accept the report from Mr. Earl Townsend, Director of Public Works, who reported emergency expenditures for the period of May 18, 2010 through June 21, 2010 in the amount of \$108.22.

Motion Carried

On motion by Mr. Dollar, duly seconded by Mr. Garrett, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby approve expenditures for the period of May 18, 2010 through June 21, 2010 in the Amount of \$1,552,743.65.

Motion Carried

Before adjourning President Jacobs then recognize Ms. Jennifer Ingram who apologized for not speaking earlier. She stated that she was present to ask the Jury for consideration in appointing her to the Natchitoches Parish Children Youth Planning Board. Relative to this, the following action was taken:

On motion by Mr. Dollar, duly seconded by Mr. Hymes, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby add to agenda appointing Ms. Jennifer Ingram to the Natchitoches Parish Children Youth Planning Board.

Motion Carried

On motion by Mr. Hoffpauir, duly seconded by Mr. Hymes, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby appoint Ms. Jennifer Ingram to the Natchitoches Parish Children Youth Planning Board.

Motion Carried

President Jacobs then recognized Mr. Woody Jackson of Praeses, LLC. Mr. Jackson told the Jury that his company has provided service for the parish for the last two years. He stated that he has pushed for payment and the Jury does not have the funds to pay for the software. Mr. Jackson then told the Jury all they have to do is pay for it and they will be reimbursed. He also told the Jury that he understood the cash problem in the parish but was present to offer a solution. Mr. Jackson stated that right now the parish is paying a monthly hosting fee and still owes the company \$57,000 dollars. The deadline for grant runs out at the end of 2010. If the parish can not pay the company by the end of 2010 then the grant money that has been approved for the parish will go away. He then asked if there is any line of credit in order to pay his company and file the paper work to get the money back. Mr. Jackson also told the Jury that his company would be willing to wave their hosting fee in order to cover the cost of interest. It was then decided that this matter would be addressed at next month's meeting.

Parish Administrator Hamilton then stated that the Parish Treasurer would like the Jury to approve what to pay. She stated that the previous motions on the revision of the budget should take effect June 1, 2010. The Jury then agreed that the revisions would be effective June 1, 2010. It was then stated that the only thing should be paid was salaries. Relative to this, the following action was taken:

On motion by Mr. Dollar, duly seconded by Mr. Hymes, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby add to the agenda authorizing the Parish Treasurer to pay only salaries for the month of June.

Motion Carried

On motion by Mr. Dollar, duly seconded by Mr. Hymes, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby authorize the Parish Treasurer to pay only salaries for the month of June.

Motion Carried

On motion by Mr. Dollar, duly seconded by Mrs. Stoker, that the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, in regular and legal session convened, does hereby adjourn until the next regular or called meeting of the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury.

Motion Carried

Attest:

Fred Jacobs, President

Catherine Hamilton,
Parish Administrator