

**ST. LANDRY PARISH COUNCIL
PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6th, 2022
OLD CITY MARKET, 131 W. BELLEVUE ST.
OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA**

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

1. Chairman Dexter Brown called this meeting of the Public Works Committee of the St. Landry Parish Council to order.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance & Invocation was said earlier in the meeting.**

3. **Roll Call:**

Mildred Thierry, Gil Savoy, Dexter Brown and Jimmie Edwards.

Absent: Alvin Stelly and Coby Clavier. Ex-Officio Vivian Olivier.

Councilman Jerry Red Jr., joined the Public Works Committee to make a quorum.

4. **Person to address the Committee:**

Public Works Chairman Dexter Brown stated, “Each Speaker will have at least five minutes to speak on any particular topic at hand that is on our agenda. I would like each speaker to refrain from using any type of vulgar, obsessive, abusive or offensive language whenever they come up to speak. If that happens, then we will ask that you be removed from the meeting. Please adhere to it.”

- **Mr. Robert Voitier Jr., addressed the council.** He stated, “Good afternoon Madam Chair and members of the council, the staff, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Robert Voitier. I am against moving that monument. It is important to know why things are done. I have been listening to the arguments in favor of moving it and I just have to say in my opinion that it is nonsense. I don’t think any public actions should be taken by this body based on nonsense. I know that I have talked to some of the members of the council early on. Two of them said their mind was made up that it was going to be moved and they were not going to change it no matter what. They can do that, but when I was practicing law we call that kind of behavior arbitrary and capricious. If your insurance company did that to you, you could get money from them because it is wrong. So why are we doing this, I don’t know. I was reading the transcript of the earlier hearings and I came across a comment that the proponent of moving the monument made. It was in response to one I had made previously. I said things are going on in the country and now they are going on here in Opelousas that just make me very angry. I am talking about the riots and the BLM and Antifa Business. I said could have shot my TV one hundred times in the last two years. The proponent of moving the monument said the only time see tears is when the Saint’s lose. I am reading that and I am thinking, what about the night the election returns came in in the DA’s race. I am thinking, maybe that was another night that he could have shot it, maybe not. But really that is what is going on here. If Mr. Cravins would have won the DA’s race, none of this would be happening. This is just cheap politics. This is a way for him to get his name back in print, get free publicity and try to make himself politically relevant again. Anybody who does not know what happened, I think the election was in 2020, Mr. Cravins was appointed DA. He was never elected DA. Mr. Earl Taylor, Mr. Harold Taylor’s brother appointed Mr. Cravins, in my opinion for the purpose of continuing some little dynasty they had in mind. He wanted to appoint Mr. Cravins so Mr. Cravins could run as the incumbent.
- **Councilman Harold Taylor stated,** “Excuse me Mr. Chairman, would the speaker leave personalities out of this and stick to your argument, please.”
- **Public Works Chairman Dexter Brown stated,** “Thank you Mr. Taylor, I was just about to say that. Mr. Voitier, could you stick on the Confederate Memorial topic please.”

- **Mr. Robert Voitier Jr., stated,** “I don’t think it is really off base. I think it is all relevant. If you don’t want me to use names, I won’t. I will say the proponent of moving it and one of the councilmembers have an interest in this in my opinion. Now I could be wrong but that would make sense as to why this is happening. But to say that the United Daughters of the Confederacy or propaganda organ for the Ku Klux Klan is ridiculous, it is nonsense. To say that is a Klan Monument, that is nonsense. Politics is the second oldest profession and most of us older people know what the oldest is. Both of them involve the use or misuse of something very precious and the most precious thing that the council have is the public trust. I think if they vote to move that monument, they have violated the public trust and that is just my opinion. When you do that, you can never get it back. So I am asking all the members of the council, don’t decide on nonsense; decide on the truth. That is all I have to say. Thank you.”
- **Ms. Delita Rubin-Broussard addressed the council.** She stated, “Good evening, I am Delita Rubin-Broussard. First I want to say thank you all, the council, for electing me for a second term on the St. Landry Parish Tourism Commission. I am here to give my opinion on why this monument should be removed and placed elsewhere. Some say it represents history, whose history? My grandfather fought in World War I, that is history and I am proud of that, but this monument does not represent our entire history nor does it represent our present and we are asking for your support that it be removed from this location that causes many of our citizens unnecessary pain to have this monument that represents the confederacy desire to continue to enslave African Americans at a place where so many of them did not receive Justice. It is unfair and insensitive. In closing, we as Citizens are not asking that it be destroyed but removed where history belongs. Thank you.”
- **Mr. Marvin Richard addressed the council.** He stated, “Good after noon, this is my little peace. History, we understand where history was, we are talking about today. What I want you all to understand is, we are in a different time and in a different place. I believe that we understand that that was history and we know what it was about. I hate to go back and say black and white but at the end of the day, we need to continue to build St. Landry as great as St. Landry can be. When we are talking about dividing by keeping something that is here that was not right in the first place. We are talking in 2022 to leave it there or keep it in St. Landry Parish or in Opelousas. It is not fair to the people that understand that that is not the right history. I am blessed to be among people that understand, white people, black people. I am glad to be among people that really understand that we have to fight to continue to build this community as great as this community is. I am blessed to be in front of you guys because I know you guys will make the right decision. I am hoping this decision will be to move this monument, send it somewhere away from here and let’s continue to love on one another. This is what it’s all about, let’s love each other because coming before you all to say that I want to keep it here, you don’t have a fight because today in 2022, we are loving one another, right? That was not put there for love. That was not put there for people to look at each other and say, let’s not look at race. In today times, we need to do better. So you guys up there, it is up to you guys to do what you all have to do. I will tell you all, I am a City Councilman, if that was in the front of the council and I have a couple of my colleagues here, I am going to tell you what it would be, it would be gone. God Bless you all, thank you for having me.”
- **Ms. Bambi Polotzola addressed the council.** She stated, “Good evening, my name is Bambi Polotzola and I am a lifelong resident of St. Landry Parish. I have attended the past two meetings which the monument have been discussed. I have heard testimony from people who share great pride in the longevity of their families living here in St. Landry Parish. I am not sure if any of my ancestors fought in the Civil War but I am sure of is that I have benefitted from the color of my skin and the privilege that it is affording me. That monument was put up by women who looked like me. I am speaking here tonight because the burden of correcting this wrong should not be on the shoulders of the people who continue to face discrimination today. Some people say, why bring it up now, when did this become an issue? I have taught about that

monument at least once a month over the past several years. I have said too many people that we need to do something about it, but I did nothing and for that I was wrong. That monument is not just about what it was meant to do all those years ago, it is about the oppression that black people have faced for centuries. I taught at a local public school about 15 years ago, not very far away from here. I was discussing with an Aid in my class who is my right hand, she was about 20 years older than me. We were talking about how good the fried chicken salad is at the Palace. It was a great conversation about food. She shared with me that when she was younger she had to get food at the back of the Palace. She was not angry, she was not sad, she just told me about her experience, but I was mad. How could they treat this person who I loved so much like that? You see my privilege had shielded me from those experiences but it was the reality that she lived. You look around this room, there are many people here who look like her, who had to be served at the back of the restaurant. That is what that monument symbolizes. Some may say that is the past, let's move on. It is a symbol of centuries of oppression and discrimination that still exist today. For some of us here in the privilege of our skin, we have not even had to think about it, but now you do. You need to move that monument but you need to do even more, you need to internalize what this means. Thank you."

- **Mr. Don Leger addressed the council.** He stated, "Mr. President and member of the committee, thank you for an opportunity to speak. I will be brief because I have expressed my taught at an earlier meeting. I just would like to correct a misconception, I think it is an historical fact. We have had eloquent attorneys tell you, we don't know who owns it and they confused the issue and another eloquent attorney argue and I am not skilled qualified attorney and I don't have the eloquence that they have. But I do have a few facts. If that monument was not placed there to oppress black voters, then why is it that it was not until 1948 that a black man was allowed to register to vote in modern times I am talking about? The people that said it never was an offense, it maybe never was an offense to them. That monument out there and what it symbolizes is way more than my little opinion. It symbolizes part of who we are and what stand far. I have been asked to reconsider what I have said earlier to the council and I have reconsidered. I was mistaken when I suggested we take it out and move it out by the Yambilee Grounds or something like that, but that is still on parish property. That monument should not be on Parish Property. I don't think that our city mayor and council would welcome putting it anywhere in town, you would have to ask them if you think that they would give you a certificate of appropriateness to move it in the historic district. It has to get a certificate of necessity. I am sorry about what all happened in the past but let's move forward but get this symbol out of here. Thank you."
- **Mr. James Bellard addressed the council.** He stated, "Good afternoon council, audience, good evening. I am James Bellard. I am here on behalf of my ancestors. A couple of years ago I was involved in an incident where I was wrongfully accused and arrested. My freedom was robbed from me for approximately two hours. On my way here I taught about some people that was never afforded the opportunity for one minute of freedom in their lives. Do you know freedom is a major word? Those two hours that my freedom was robbed from me, every minute felt like one year. I sat there with two young men that I knew were poverty stricken men. They said, 'I did not do nothing and I am here'. I told those two men I will come back and help you all. I woke up last week and I said that I have lied to those men. I got out and I did not go back and help them, but tonight I will make that true, I will help them. But I want to say to you as an African American Business Man in this community, I have faced the ugly scars of racism, hate and evil. I have bared the scars, they are small compared to what my ancestors had to endure. When a child was born from the womb of a woman that never taste freedom a day in their lives, they came onto this earth a slave, and they die a slave. One of those names on that monument had a history of being severely hurtful to his slaves, severely. He was a master in punishment, he was a master in punishment. Today we stand here today and say there is nothing wrong with this monument, if there is a human being with a heart in his body that can look back on the

history of what that monument stood for and can say in their heart today that there is nothing wrong with monument. If I happen to leave this earth and we both meet in the same place, I have messed up over here because I know darn well I am not in the right place. There is no way you can defend evil. You can't defend evil. We are here on earth, we are the authors, we are the publishers and we are the movie directors of our lives. We are in control of our today and tomorrow. Those people, my ancestors never had the right to say what time they are going to wake up, what time they are going to knock off and what time they are going to go to bed. When the baby falls from the womb of the mommy and she don't even have the right to give it milk. That is cruel and inhumane. When we can stand and reward people, that is a reward ceremony when put that monument. You are giving them the plaque and saying a job well done. That is not a monument that is a plaque. When they put their name on something that is a plaque. We call it a monument. It is a plaque because we are regarding them for their evil acts. We are in 2022 and we still defending wrong history. We were told in first grade that Christopher Columbus discovered America, biggest lie I have ever known to man. He killed one million Indians trying to own the land. When are we going to start telling the truth about the real truth about this monument? The only problem with this monument is that it has been here 30-40 years to long. Thank you all for listening."

- **Ms. Lena Charles yield to address the council.**
- **Public Works Chairman Dexter Brown stated,** "The next speak is Mr. Charles Cravins. Mr. Cravins before you start speaking, I would like to apologize to you for not speaking up sooner to the person that was making direct comments to you. I want to publically apologize to you. I am sorry."
- **Mr. Charles Cravins addressed the council.** He stated, "Mr. Brown, don't you worry yourself about that. I'd remember that. I am so proud of all of the folks who have come here and stood here tonight and talked about removing that monument. They make me proud of my participation in this because what I have noticed is that the side of the argument that wants to move the monument is not a monolithic group, they don't all look alike and they don't all have the same background. It is a cross section of our parish. When I first came here I told you all that I was coming here in the spirit of love. As Councilman Richard said, it might be hard for some of you all to understand what we are doing, we are doing in a spirit of love. You cannot have a friend, listen to me now, you cannot have friend, not a real friend if your friend is not your equal. You can love them, you can take care of them, you can feed them but that is a pet, that is a pet and that is not a friend. In order for us to be friends we have to be equal and that statue is a monument to inequality. Mr. Voitier is actually a very nice person to talk to. He and I have spent about one hour on the phone. We had great conversation. During that conversation I said the problem that we have here is that you know your history and I know your history but you don't know my history. This parish have a long history that is not the ugly history of people hurting each other. That monument is a monument to slavery and a monument to keep people from voting. My first ancestors came here in 1764. 1764, the man was Gregoire Guillory, the woman was Marguerite Guillory. I have a case right here in case anybody, cause sometime when I say things here, people think that I may not have facts to back them up, but this is from the Louisiana Bar Journal. This is a recount from the August 1983 addition of the Louisiana Bar Journal. It recounts the case of Marguerite Guillory when she won her freedom in the Louisiana Courts in 1782. What other state in the United States, what other territory in the United States would have granted a slave her freedom in court in 1782? In 1859, hundreds of African Americans were forced to leave this parish because of the oppression that they were just starting to face at that time. They went to Haiti and then they came back. 1865 the Civil War was over and in 1866 this Police Jury passed the Black Code which prohibited any freed black person from owning property from even being in this parish unless they were sponsored by a white person, they could not own a house, they could rent a house. This parish council did that. In 1868, two hundred people were killed in this parish to keep them from voting for a Republican. Between 1868 and 1948 there was not an

African American Registered Voter in this parish. Eighty years until Richard Milspar had to register as a Republican because his vote would not count until he registered as a Republican so they let him register. So we cannot say that that monument is not a symbol of oppression but what we can say is that my ancestors, black and white fought arm in arm in Bramblett against the Confederacy. That is what this parish ought to be proud of. I don't want another monument Mr. Voitier offered me that, I don't want that. That monument needs to be off of our common property. Thank you all so much."

- **Councilwoman Mildred Thierry stated,** "I did not speak up last time but I feel compelled to speak. From the first time this statue was mentioned up to last week, I received over fifteen calls. Of the fifteen calls, the majority of them were in favor and felt that it was the right thing to do. But there is one particular person who made a statement that left my spirit troubled and I feel that I need to put it out there. The statement was made that the council only wants to have that removed because of Mr. Cravins. I told that person, let me tell you how this is done. I said that we are thirteen councilmembers, we are elected to represent the people in our district. When it is an issue, the thirteen councilmembers have to come together and make a decision by a vote. We vote base on what we think is the right thing to do in the sight of God first. What is the right thing to do on behalf of the people that we represent? To make a statement like saying it is nonsense to some, it maybe nonsense, but to others it is a nonsense, we have a difference of opinion. So just know this, whatever way this council should decide to vote, it is because we believe that it is the right thing to do in the sight of God and in the sight of the Constituents that we represent. Thank you and may God Bless each and every one of you here tonight."

5. **Public Works Report:**

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "The Public Works Report is kind of simple like we always do. We are digging ditches thru-out the parish. Come June 1st, 2022 we will have another phase of this ARA money and we will start digging a lot more ditches in our parish. We are looking at different roads in our parish to do some overlay projects. William Jarrell is looking at that and he is giving us a cost estimate in the near future. That is all I have."

A motion was made by Councilwoman Mildred Thierry, seconded by Councilman Jimmie Edwards to accept the Public Works Report.

On roll call vote: YEAS: Jerry Red Jr., Mildred Thierry, Gil Savoy and Jimmie Edwards.

NAYS: None. ABSENT: Alvin Stelly and Coby Clavier. ABSTAINED: None.

Motion carried.

6. Update on the Confederate Monument:

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "Getting a price to move it, I am waiting on a price for that to come in at any time now. They came and look at it last week sometimes. They will give me a price to move it. The only place that would take the monument is going to be Camp Moore which is by Kentwood. We have to write a letter to them. Their board will meet on May 22, 2022 to accept the monument. The cost is completely on us to remove it, transport it and set it back up in its place over there. I have not had anyone come to me with any kind of recommendations other than that. We had one private citizen that is trying to get it to Washington, I talked to the mayor in Washington and I don't think it is going to get to Washington but they are in the process of trying to get it there also. That is all I have."

Councilman Jerry Red Jr., stated, "Our Legal Counsel drew up a Resolution and the Resolution reads:

***BE IT RESOLVED,** by the St. Landry Parish Council that the Confederate monument in the Northeast corner of the St. Landry Parish District Courthouse square, which was erected and dedicated on February 22, 1920, by the Louisiana Division U.D.C. and the Gordon Chapter of U.D.C., shall be removed from the St. Landry Parish District Courthouse square.*

***BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** by the St. Landry Parish Council that St. Landry Parish President Jessie Bellard is hereby authorized to proceed with the removal of the Confederate monument from the Northeast corner of the St. Landry Parish District Courthouse square.'*

Now this is the Resolution that was drawn up by our Legal Counsel. If we are in favor of it, we can make a motion and pass this resolution. As Mr. Bellard just said, we would have to wait until May 22, 2022.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “May 22 is when Camp Moore is going to have their meeting of their board to accept the monument.”

Councilman Jerry Red Jr., stated, “So we can still take action as far as saying we are going to have the monument removed off of Courthouse Square, but it won’t be removed until after we have a verdict from Camp Moore. If you all are in favor of that we can make a motion. Whatever you decide that we want to do, if we want it removed and wait until the 22nd after we find out, then we can go with that. If you all have something different, we can draw up that resolution. Now I am completed.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “It has been brought to my attention that someone is prepared to take it now instead of waiting on a meeting. Would you like to stand up, he said he would take it.”

A gentleman from the audience spoke. He was not near the microphone therefore his statement cannot be transcribed.

Public Works Chairman Dexter Brown stated, “We have some legalities that we have to take care of. Thanks for the offer, we will take it into consideration. Thank you.”

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, “Each time we have a full council meeting we have an opportunity for a full council to vote to pass the resolution. That is like two weeks from now, do you all want to pass it to that.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “The question is, can we give it to Mr. Bellard, I think that is the question.”

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, “You mean donate or sell it?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Donate it.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “At no expense to the Parish.”

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, “You can donate the monument for a public purpose as authorized by Louisiana Constitution Article 7 Section 14C. It can be donated for a public purpose or it can be sold according to Louisiana Revised Statute Title 33 Section 4711, it can be sold. Don’t think we are looking at selling it, but it can be donated for a public purpose according to the Constitution of Louisiana.”

Public Works Chairman Dexter Brown stated, “Mr. Duplechain, not to get into a legal battle with this, if we are going to do something, if we would like to put it up, if we would vote to put it up for a bid, like we do our bidding process, because we just can’t give it to anybody because, if we would give it to one person, then the next person would say, I want it as well.”

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, “That is correct, it can be donated for a public purpose. The council may decide that the council does not want to sell it but it can be donated for a public purpose which is a museum.”

Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated, “I am not sure what is going on at this moment right now but what I understand is we are discussing if the monument is going to be removed. I think in the last meeting we spoke about moving the monument but it was about giving the people from the Confederate side an opportunity to get it removed and have it located where

ever they felt it needed to go, as long as it got out of here. I don't know why we are thinking that it is not being moved because it is going to be removed. I think that was already understood in the last meeting. In the last meeting it was to make sure we could get Mr. Bellard with that group of people and they were going to move it"

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, "You remember in the last meeting, I taught it was to find a place. So we don't have a place, yet."

Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated, "Mr. Bellard, what is the status from the other side? If they have not come, they have until the full council to get here and make a decision on that."

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "Right, they are trying to move it to Washington. Washington Louisiana.

Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated, "In case that fail, then actions will have to be taken further because it has to be removed."

Public Works Chairman Dexter Brown stated, "We have already passed the item on the agenda for persons to address the council. So at this time we are not allowing anybody to address the council on this matter. If you all would like to get in contact with Mr. Bellard, you can get a card from him but right now, we are not going to let anybody address anything else regarding the monument. Mr. Voitier, you as well, get a card from Mr. Bellard. We have surpassed that item on the agenda."

Councilman Easton Shelvin stated, "At this particular point my question to the President is, can we have the monument removed immediately and placed in storage or something until they find a place for it?"

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "We could, but the problem is, it will come with a cost. I am trying not to spend the money twice. That is my only problem."

Councilman Easton Shelvin stated, "We won't spend it twice if we remove it. If the Confederate Daughters come for it then they will pay for that, right?"

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "So you all are saying, remove it and then whoever wants it at that point, it will be up to them."

Councilman Easton Shelvin stated, "Yes, let's remove it now."

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "Okay, I am good with it. I don't want to spend.....it is estimated about \$15,000.00."

Councilman Easton Shelvin stated, "We have somebody that is willing to pay the money."

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "I don't want to spend it twice. That is the only thing that I am asking."

Councilman Easton Shelvin stated, "Maybe he can donate the money another way so we won't spend it twice."

Councilman Jerry Red Jr., stated, "I know you mentioned about the cost being paid twice. That is why I said, if we take this Resolution that was read earlier, and we take that into effect, but it won't be moved off the ground until after the 22nd when you find out."

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "I will get with the Confederate Daughters and the Sons of the Confederacy tomorrow and let them know the update on it. Either they will move on it or not. Like Mr. Lejeune stated, they have until the full council meeting to come to you

all. I will call them tomorrow and see what their answer is. I have not heard anything since last week, they were trying to get it to the town of Washington.”

Councilman Jerry Red Jr., stated, “We have three things before this committee right now. If we want to take action on this resolution, do we want Mr. Bellard to take it but we still do not know what he is going to do with the monument. I am trying to find out. If the man is going to take the monument, or if this council vote to let him take the monument and then, I am not sure of what is his intentions, but I would like to know what ever we are going to vote on. So that is why I am trying to find out if we adopt this resolution and after the 22nd you will know what way to go. But they want it to be removed immediately.”

Public Works Chairman Dexter Brown stated, “Let go with your motion, do I have second on Mr. Red’s motion regarding the resolution?”

Councilman Jerry Red Jr., stated, “My motion is just to have....I am not making a motion to remove it immediately. I am going to tell you that right now. My motion is to read this, have it done as read. After the 22nd of May, when you find out if they are going to take the monument, then we will remove it from there then. But if you all want to have it removed immediately, you come up with your own motion. This is my motion.”

A motion was made by Councilman Jerry Red Jr., seconded by Councilwoman Mildred Thierry to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, April 20th, 2022** to adopt **Resolution No. 006-2022.** A Resolution to authorize the Parish President Jessie Bellard to proceed with the removal of the Confederate Monument from the Northeast Corner of the St. Landry Parish District Courthouse Square.

On roll call vote: YEAS: Jerry Red Jr., Mildred Thierry and Jimmie Edwards.

NAYS: Gil Savoy. ABSENT: Alvin Stelly and Coby Clavier. ABSTAINED: None.

Motion forwarded.

7. Authorize the Parish President Jessie Bellard to send a letter to the City of Opelousas in reference to de-annexation of the St. Landry Parish Airport.

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Parish Government owns the Airport, all the property around it, everything is included. It is also annexed into the city. Every time we have an issue out there they have to go to the city to do their stuff when it comes to the Hangers. I have to get involved with the Fire Marshall’s Office because the Airport is considered to be Commercial Property. It is not Commercial Property, it is zoned for Commercial with the city but it is not, not for what we use it for. So what I would like to do is De-Annex it from the city of Opelousas and let the Parish run it like it supposed to be ran. When somebody comes to do any work at the Airport, they come to our office to get their permits and their inspections and not run it as a Commercial piece of property.”

Councilman Harold Taylor stated, “I know about de-annexation. I am not sure about the Parish De-Annexing of the city, the city could de-annex us. Legal, how does this work?”

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, “Right now the Airport is inside of the City municipality. If it were to reverse that, then the city attorney, Travis Broussard and I would have to get together on that.”

Councilman Harold Taylor questioned, “Do you have the statue that allow us to do that?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Mr. Taylor, I hired another attorney to represent me on this matter right here only for the purpose of gathering information for the annexation of property that we have in the parish, like Love’s Truck Stop and also the de-annexation of this airport. I want to make sure that the information that we gather is independent of any sources in the parish.”

Councilman Harold Taylor stated, “I got that but my question is, do you have a legal opinion on that so we can move forward on it, or should we wait until we see it in writing because you know sometimes we say things and it is not what it is.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I will have that for you all at the full council meeting. It will be in writing from the attorney that is going to be giving it to Mr. Duplechain.”

Councilman Harold Taylor stated, “Is the city agreeing to do this?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I don’t know, I did not even ask him.”

Councilman Harold Taylor stated, “Maybe we order get a little input from the city before we get to involved and spend a lot of money on legal work. They might say no, we will not do that.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “That is why the legal attorney that we hired is going to give us our option.”

Councilman Harold Taylor stated, “You know we had the same issue with the hospital down in Arnaudville and it cost us \$170,000.00 in legal fees.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “That is a different situation because that was owned by a board and it eventually came by the parish government. I did not think that was right either. Here is our problem, every day we fight a battle. Our airport is growing in the right direction. Whenever people come to my office to start the negotiation with hangers, the first thing they have to do is go to City Hall and deal with the City Hall. Sometimes they have issues, I do call the Mayor and he does address them. I just want to make it easier for me and for our people at the airport that everything is handled on the parish level.”

Councilman Harold Taylor stated, “I got that, but I have never heard of a parish de-annexing from city property. I am sorry, I have only been in municipal government for 33 years so I should know a little bit, but I don’t know if that is going to happen, I have never heard of that. I think we need to wait on that until we get all the information before we take any action. Thank you.”

Councilman Jerry Red Jr. stated, “What are we trying to do here?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “We want to take the Airport Property out of the City of Opelousas and leave it into the Parish of St. Landry.”

Councilman Jerry Red Jr., stated, “So it is in the City Limits right now?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “That is correct.”

Councilman Jerry Red Jr., stated, “Have this ever been done before?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard started, I am not quite sure. I am not too concerned about what everybody else is doing. I am concerned about what we need to do in our parish that benefits our airport. I feel that this will be a better fit for our airport. That way we can provide a service to the people who want to come to our parish and build hangers in our parish. We do have some people who want to come to the airport and build hangers and they get here and they turn around and they go back to Lafayette. I need them to stop doing that and I need them to come over here and deal with our people in our office. It is not Commercial Property, it is not subject to the laws and the regulations of the Fire Marshall. When it comes to Commercial Property. When you look at the cost of what it is going to

take to build a hanger under the Commercial Code verses the weekend flyers that we have at our airport, that burn the fuel and spend the money at our airport is totally different. Every time we have a hanger built at our airport, I have to get involved with the Fire Marshalls Office. It just needs to get to the point where they come and do business with the parish, it is a parish own piece of property.

Councilman Jerry Red Jr., stated, “So if we de-annex from the city, then it will become parish property?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “It is already Parish Property.”

Councilman Jerry Red Jr., stated, “This is what is messing me around.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “What happens right now is, everything is subject to city rules and city ordinances. It is not subject to our ordinances. It is subjected to the city ordinance and whatever their code is.”

A motion was made by Councilman Jimmie Edwards, seconded by Councilwoman Mildred Thierry to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday April 20th, 2022** to authorize the Parish President Jessie Bellard to send a letter to the City of Opelousas in reference to De-annexation of the St. Landry Parish Airport.

On roll call vote: YEAS: Mildred Thierry, Gil Savoy and Jimmie Edwards.

NAYS: Jerry Red Jr. ABSENT: Alvin Stelly and Coby Clavier. ABSTAINED: None.

Motion forwarded.

8. Discuss abandoning Garrett Lane off of Wisdom Road. (Councilman Dexter Q. Brown).
Public Works Chairman Dexter Brown stated, “I put this on the agenda. It is just a little stretch of land, no one lives down that lane. We have not service that lane since 2016. I would like to have a motion and a second to abandon Garrett Lane.”

Councilman Jerry Red Jr., stated, “Garrett Lane use to have one house down that lane, is that correct?”

Public Works Chairman Dexter Brown stated, “Yes sir. The house is abandon. Ms. Mable Garrett died about 8-10 years ago. I spoke with Ms. Precious, she said that we have not serviced that area since 2016. They only have two fields on both sides. It was just a lane to get to the house.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I don’t know who owns the property down there. Are both sides of the road owned by the same people?”

Public Works Chairman Dexter Brown stated, “Yes, but they sold the land. Somebody else bought it, it is up for sale. We have not done anything to the property/the lane itself since 2016. So it is like six years that we have not done anything on it.”

Councilman Jerry Red Jr., stated, “You still have to find out who owns the property to make sure that.....”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I think they have to make that request to have that road taken out of the system. It has to go to somebody. Somebody has to own it. Usually what happens, it reverts back to the original land owners. I was not aware of that so I will look into it.”

Councilman Harold Taylor stated, “I think Mr. Bellard is right on target. If there is one land owner on both sides of the road we are going to abandon, no problem. But is you have one person that owns one lot on a mile of road, you have to have their permission to do it. You can’t shut a public road down because it has not been maintained since 2016. We have a lot of

roads that have not been maintained since 2015. Maybe we need to do a little more research on this before we start taking action.”

Public Works Chairman Dexter Brown stated, “We will **Table this Resolution** to abandon Garrett Lane that is located off of Wisdom Road until further information is gathered.

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I will look into it tomorrow.”

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, “That land owner, the Tax Assessors Website will have their address for a letter to contact them.”

9. Authorize the Council Clerk to advertise for one appointment for the remainder of a four year term to East St. Landry Consolidated Gravity Drainage District No. 1 that is set to expire on 11-18-2023.

A motion was made by Councilman Jerry Red Jr., seconded by Councilman Jimmie Edwards to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday April 20th, 2022** to authorize the Council Clerk to advertise for one appointment for the remainder of a four year term to East St. Landry Consolidated Gravity Drainage District No. 1 that is set to expire on 11-18-2023. On roll call vote: YEAS: Jerry Red Jr., Mildred Thierry, Gil Savoy and Jimmie Edwards. NAYS: None. ABSENT: Alvin Stelly and Coby Clavier. ABSTAINED: None.

Motion forwarded.

10. Authorize the Council Clerk to advertise for one appointment to the Public Works Commission District Six for a four-year term. (06-16-2022 – 06-16-2026).

A motion was made by Councilman Jimmie Edwards, seconded by Councilman Gil Savoy to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday April 20, 2022** all applications received for one appointment to the Public Works Commission District Six for a four year term. (06-16-2022 – 06-16-2026).

On roll call vote: YEAS: Jerry Red Jr., Mildred Thierry, Gil Savoy and Jimmie Edwards. NAYS: None. ABSENT: Alvin Stelly and Coby Clavier. ABSTAINED: None.

Motion forwarded.

11. Discuss a Culvert Permit regarding the Fontenot Property on Boy Scout Road near Washington. (Councilman Harold Taylor).

Councilman Harold Taylor stated, “Thank you Mr. Chairman, I think I worked Mr. Bellard on this and the attorney and there have been some confusion but we have it with our Parish Engineer now who will give us an update.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I think by Friday we will have an answer. There is an Engineer study done by Mr. Fontenot so our Engineer is looking at that Engineer’s report to make sure that everything is going to be good. Our only purpose in this is the road that drains. Other than that, we don’t have an issue.”

Councilman Harold Taylor stated, “We can withdraw.”

Public Works Chairman Dexter Brown stated, “Okay, we can withdraw Agenda item 11.”

12. Discuss sending a letter to Representative Dustin Miller, Senator Gerald Boudreaux and Shawn Wilson (DOTD) asking for any help in expediting the overlay of reconstruction on LA HWY 178 from Shuteston 182 to HWY 182 in Sunset. (Councilman Wayne Ardoin).

Councilman Harold Taylor stated, “Mr. Ardoin, (who is absent from this meeting) asked me to speak on this. He wants to include Senator Bob Hensgens who represents that particular road.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I have an update on that. We have been in talks and it is happening next year, the first part of next year. That is the plan. It is happening next year.

That was thru the Metropolitan Planning Commission, that money is coming in. They only go up to HWY 178. So it will start off at 178 and I made the request for it to go all the way to the end of the parish line. It is happening, you all can send a letter but we know that it is happening and we are in contact with the DOTD and they assured us. We have been going back and forth with paperwork.”

Public Works Chairman Dexter Brown stated, “So we can pull Agenda Item #12?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “No, No, I am just saying, if you all want to send letters it will not hurt. I was just giving you all an update that it is happening.”

A motion was made by Councilman Jerry Red Jr., seconded by Councilman Jimmie Edwards to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday April 20th, 2022** to approve sending a letter to Representative Dustin Miller, Senator Gerald Boudreaux, Mr. Shawn Wilson of DOTD and Senator Bob Hensgens asking for any help in expediting the overlay of reconstruction of LA HWY 178 from Shuteston 182 to HWY 182 in Sunset.

On roll call vote: YEAS: Jerry Red Jr., Mildred Thierry, Gil Savoy and Jimmie Edwards.

NAYS: None. ABSENT: Alvin Stelly and Coby Clavier. ABSTAINED: None.

Motion forwarded.

13. Discuss parking at the Courthouse. (Councilman Wayne Ardoin).

Councilman Harold Taylor stated, “Mr. Ardoin would like to pull this item. He will be getting with Mr. Bellard to discuss it with him when he gets back on his feet.”

No Action taken.

14. Discuss any other business properly brought before this committee.

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Mr. Chairman, Mr. LeBouef is here. He just came in a little late. He had told me that he was coming. He just got here a little late so he is here if you all want to ask him any questions. He is just offering.”

Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated, “I would like to ask a couple of questions to Mr. Bellard.

Mr. Bellard, I spoke to you about lifting a road off of Guillory Road. Do you have an update on that, nothing yet?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Not really, it is going to take nothing but money on that issue. We did put some material. We did lift that road to some degree but if we put too much material at one time and not packing it the process, it is just not going to worth anything. So the plans are is to keep on adding the wrap material as it become available and two or three inches at a time, packing it and building it up that way, if we put any dirt, it is not going to do any good.”

Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated, “My next question I have for you is, the revenue that is supposed to be coming in for Bayou Mallet, do we know about when that is going to happen?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I had a conversation with the Secretary of DEQ last week at the Capital. It is on track. He is going to follow up. It is approximately \$428,000.00 to do a cleaning from: I forgot the name of that road. up until the parish line. It is on track, it was approved last year. Like everything else, it takes about a year to come tuition, so that is what we are trying to do.”

Councilman Timmy Lejeune questioned, “It should happen this summer, is that what you are thinking?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “\$428,000.00 is what the estimated cost is to do the job. He assured me that that money was available for the project.”

Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated, “At this time I rest.”

Public Works Chairman Dexter Brown stated, “Does someone on the council have specific questions for Solid Waste and Mr. LeBouef?”

Mr. Richard LeBouef, Executive Director, of Solid Waste addressed the council. He stated,

“This is not my usual attire. My mother is 78 and she is being moved and the movers hit a gas line in the house. So my apologies on my attire.”

Councilman Jerry Red Jr. questioned, “One of the questions I have Mr. LeBouef, I had a couple of constituents ask about the incoming people that will be taking the trash. They are wondering if they will be able to handle the job because they have never done this line of work before and can they handle the whole parish?”

Mr. Richard LeBouef stated, “They have done something similar to it. The revenue got a 13.5 million dollar line of credit. The checks and balances that we have contingencies in the contract now we have some traction. We have 20 validated misses in 30 days, we can find somebody else. We are not going to be under somebody else’s gun like we have been for the last 14 years, it is not working. We thought we went out for an RFP and we did a public bid opening and the commission voted and we really generally feel with the resources we have been meeting with them every two weeks. We had a meeting this morning at 9:00 a.m. and we really feel with the resources in place we can do what we need to do and exceed the expectations.”

Councilman Jerry Red Jr., stated, “My main reason is because we put four of the commissioners over there at Solid Waste. I am concerned about how did they vote on this because if they voted for this and we start having problems and the problem is not only going to line on us, but it will line on them also. I am concerned to make sure that whoever is going to be taking in the trash, they can handle the job picking up trash over this whole parish.”

Mr. Richard LeBouef stated, “I agree with your concerns Mr. Jerry as well as anybody else. What we have got in place right now, again it is not working.”

Councilman Jerry Reed Jr. stated, “I agree.”

Mr. Richard LeBouef stated, “Anyway upward, I think would be some positive movement. I want you to know that myself and all the commissioners and Judge Doherty have taken putting a lot of time in this contract. We had nine solicitations, two people, no bid. I really feel like having in the city limits and the smaller areas in the parish, smaller subdivisions, smaller municipalities we are going to need some rear loaders. I think that will be a lot easier. You will see those guys running down your street and they will be picking up some of the lighter bulky stuff and they will be picking up some of the lighter vegetated stuff. We need to do a better job with the tax dollars that are afforded to us. Everything is going up, the price of Diesel, everything. We really feel that what we have done, where we are at, we stand on that decision.”

Councilman Jerry Red Jr., stated, “I understand with this new contract it is going to be one pick up for everyone. What I am saying, with this new contract, it is going to go with this one pick up for the municipalities as well as the unincorporated. Is this correct?”

Mr. Richard LeBouef stated, “That is correct. April 18 we will start the parish wide house count. I-49 and 190 are going to be the Grid Patterns. We are going to have 14 trucks that will be accessible to where we only have 9 or 10 now. In this contract you will have 2 response vehicles. Two, one ton trucks pulling a trailer. If there is a problem somewhere,

instead of taking a larger truck and diverting it, they will go ahead and take these one tons and they will be able to take care of an isolated incident without breaking away from the other ones. You also will have a smaller rear loader to get into some of these tricky issues. Mr. Bellard and I spoke about a road on Wichita Road, it was only 29 thousand pounds is what the rating of that bridge is. Every truck that passes that is way over that. This is something that we want to address. The collector that we have now does not have these resources, these guys will have that. The trucks will start arriving July 15 and should be completed delivery by August 3, all 14 trucks.”

Councilman Jerry Red Jr., stated, “Well that answers my question, we just have to see the results.”

Mr. Richard LeBouef stated, “Not a problem, I understand. The really good thing is, again I don’t mean any disrespect to anyone, but the contract that is in place now was put in 2007. You have gone thru ISI, you have been thru Progressive and you have watched Waste Management leave. All of you have typically called me and have had problems. The beauty of that is we have somebody that we are going to do business with local. I want to talk to the guy that is in charge, I don’t have to go four states away. I can drive 2.5 – 3 miles from the land field and talk to the guy and say hey, we have a problem. The next thing that is going to happen, if you have 20 misses, validated misses, and I have GPS, I will also have video footage. So if you call me and you tell me that I have a constituent that has an issue, I don’t have to call anybody, I can log into that port and I can see when he put his trash out. The contract that we have now, I can hold somebody’s feet to the fire. We will get some results, where we don’t get it now. If there is a miss, we have no way of proving that validation, no way, but if I want to find somebody and I find a way to do it, to be able to short pay that invoice, \$1,000.25, I have to have a joint arbitrary meeting with them before I can do so, not anymore.”

Councilman Jerry Red Jr., stated, “Well the good thing about this, we have more teeth in the ordinance and we have more voice if something is not being done. I like that part. But when a constituent calls me, I want find out so I can give them the answer that they need.”

Mr. Richard LeBouef stated, “If you need me, call me, I will gladly get on the phone and go meet them and explain to them what is going on. When you see the laxity of this contract that we are operating under right now, it is horrible. It really is. It is one sided. Solid Waste, all we can do is scream and holla and hope it gets done.”

Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated, “Thank you for coming Mr. LeBouef. Whenever they first started the trash pickup, they would dump their trucks pretty frequently, so they did not have as much weight on these trucks. Are these trucks going to be monitored as far as for weight on these parish roads and what have you? You know we spend a lot of tax payer’s money building these roads and I just don’t want them to compress as much trash as they possibly can, overload these trucks and destroy our roads. We don’t really have a load limit on there but we have to look at that and consider the fact that these trucks are really very loaded, very heavy.”

Mr. Richard LeBouef stated, “Absolutely, The load limit, if I am not mistaken, I am not a D.O.T. guy but it is 80,000 pounds. It is not unlike when the truck is going to pass and pick up wet waste it amplifies it totally. You can watch everything go from probably 69 – 75 thousand pounds like that. The beauty of this contract, the largest capacity on the trucks that you are going to see is 32 yards. Right now it is 40.”

Councilwoman Mildred Thierry stated, “Mr. LeBouef, I want to personally say thank you. Every time I had a problem I text him and told him what my problem was. He said I am going to get it taken care of. Before that day was over, every problem I took to him, he took care of it and I want to thank you, I appreciate you for that.”

Mr. Richard LeBouef stated, “I appreciate you for that Ms. Mildred but again not here with us as Mr. Red want those four Commissioners you appointed. Those five others that the Mayor appointed, we have a phenomenal crew. Mr. John Guidroz is not here this evening but he is incredible. We have a phenomenal staff and I appreciate all of you and thanks for those words. Thank you Ma’am.

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere questioned Mr. Richard LeBouef but here voice was not heard on the mic.

Mr. Richard LeBouef stated, “On Saturday, May 21, 2022 we are going to have our annual hazardous house hold waste day. Everything that you have, tires, oil, batteries, electronics, everything except medicine, you can bring to us at no cost. We will have probably 15 or 18 DEQ Representatives between Opelousas Recycling Facility here on West Landry and also at our CC Duson location in Eunice. It will start at 8:00 a.m. and run until the early afternoon. We will have those DEQ Agents to take recycling paint and electronics and everything that you have please pass the word. If there is any issue that you may have that somebody is incapacitated that have stuff, call me or call the office. We will be glad to go by and pick it up before that happens or after, either or.”

Mr. Richard LeBouef stated, “I have to tell you guys. You need to know how appreciative I am to now be a registered voting constituent of Mr. Brown on Dufilho Road. Thank you all so much.”

Public Works Chairman Dexter Brown stated, “I have one item to bring up. I have a voting precinct at Southwest Elementary School where I was informed that a company bought the school from the school board. I don’t know if it is official yet. I would like to start the process of moving that voter precinct about one quarter of a mile down the road on South Bullard Street at Living Water Christian Center. I had spoken to Mr. Thierry sometimes back and he had said that it was okay. Mr. Nathaniel Thierry.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Mr. Brown, if you don’t mind can you hold up until we can get everybody’s precincts organized. I think by next month meeting we are going to have to re-do the whole system. We are going to have to start picking polling places and making sure that the precincts that are coming back into the system meet the demand of that polling place and getting back to as much as we can. We use to have 92, we need to get it close to 92. The people are having to travel like what you were saying earlier, we need to make sure. Tomorrow I am going to call Mr. Mike Hefner to make sure that he follows up, bring it to us so we can make those decisions and finish with this once and for all.”

Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated, “Mr. Bellard, we also have a precinct at Christ the King Church. They acquired an extra 1,500 voters there. That facility cannot, there is no way that it can handle that.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “What I am hoping is for us to get the precinct in and we modify it to make sure that everybody is heard. It is ridiculous people have to drive 20 miles to go and vote or in the case such as Christ the King Church, everybody goes to one location and you can’t go vote because you can’t get in there in time. It is just not built for it. I think we have to do a better job of locating the polling precinct and putting them in the right places.”

Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated, “When you asked the questions to him, a lot of these precincts people know them by location, Lawtell Elementary School, Christ the King Church and it goes on and on and on, I don’t have to name them all but the point is, some of us don’t know what 32-A and 17-B and 84-C and all that means. If it is a structure, we will have a better understanding and how many people actually getting there will know what the parking place is and all of that kind of stuff. So that would help if we could have that information whenever it comes to that time.”

Councilwoman Mildred Thierry stated, “Mr. Bellard, would you please for the public sake, touch a little bit on Broad Band. I have been getting questions such as: What areas being served first, how is that area selected to be served first and once that is done, when are the other areas going to get taken care of?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “The Acadiana Planning Commission did a study. It was paid for by the Federal Government. The Study concluded that the areas that are not served or underserved are the first ones to get it priority. L.U.S. and Allen Cable is coming in from the Southern part of our parish and coming thru the areas like the map shows. That was awarded by the Federal Government thru the National Tele-Communications Grant which the Vice President came and awarded that a couple of weeks back. That was something separate and apart. That is extra, \$30,000,000.00. That was chosen by the study, it was not chosen by anybody in this room, it was chosen by the study and it goes by a speed test. We encourage everybody to do the speed test, you can go on our website you can find it. The speed test is being conducted now because we have the GUMBO Grant that is coming up. We talked to Vinita two weeks ago, it won't go on as planned because there is so many big companies that is trying to file an objections on what the state is considering underserved or unserved. The big companies have a fiber line running in front of your house. They are saying that you have service but you don't have service because they don't provide service to you. That is my pet peeve, don't tell me you can give me service and not give it to me. That is one of the issues. They are fighting that battle right now in the State Capitol. We feel by the summer, we will have better information, but on the GUMBO Plan, it comes from the North coming down and also from the East and the West coming in. That is another thing that was done by the Stats and the actual foot print of the Acadian Planning Commission on their study. That is not the only grants that is available. We are doing some other applications as we speak for more Broad Band. We feel that within two year, depending on how they can get the equipment in and the materials, we feel in two years we are pretty much going to have our parish covered.”

Councilwoman Mildred Thierry stated, “So those that won't be covered in the first round, you are saying that it is possible there will be other funds? Although the GUMBO.....”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “There is 52 possible grant funding sources for Broad Band. You can rest assure until everybody have access to reliable fast speed internet in our parish, we will not give up.”

Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated, “Mr. Bellard, I have one last thing I want to talk to you about and that is Rozas Road. The speed limit is in two different sections down there. We addressed that already about the speeders and that other activity that goes on down that road. I received some calls and they would like to have that speed limit reduced because it was put in when they did the parish wide study and it just created a monster out there.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I would ask them to call you because you would have to make a motion to go and change it by ordinance. That is why, I am not sure what it is. I want to say that it is 45 m.p.h. I think they want to go down to 35 m.p.h. or even possibly 30 m.p.h.”

Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated, “30 m.p.h. on the whole road. The ordinance has to be introduced at the full council, it can't be introduced at the committee.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I am in favor. I get a lot of complaints on that road.”

Mr. Bobby Ardoin, Editor, Then & Now stated, “This school was not bought by a private institution. It is a state run Public Charter School, it is not private. It was bought today. I got a text message. I did not want the committee to leave here with the impression that you gave them just now. I just wanted to set the record straight. That is all.”

Public Works Chairman Dexter Brown stated, “Thank you very much for the correction Mr. Bobby.”

15. Adjourn.

A motion was made by Councilman Jimmie Edwards, seconded by Councilwoman Mildred Thierry to adjourn the Public Works Committee Meeting.

On roll call vote: YEAS: Jerry Red Jr., Mildred Thierry, Gil Savoy and Jimmie Edwards.

NAYS: None. ABSENT: Alvin Stelly and Coby Clavier. ABSTAINED: None.

Motion carried.

**I HEREBY CERTIFY THE FOREGOING TO BE EXACT AND TRUE
KAREN BARLOW, ASSISTANT COUNCIL CLERK**