

**ST. LANDRY PARISH COUNCIL
ADMINISTRATIVE/FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JULY 5th, 2023
OLD CITY MARKET, 131 W. BELLEVUE ST.
OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA**

ADMINISTRATIVE/FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

1. Administrative Finance Chairman Coby Clavier called this meeting of the Administrative/Finance Committee of the St. Landry Parish Council to order.
2. **Roll Call:** Easton Shelvin, Dexter Brown, Timmy Lejeune and Coby Clavier.
Ex-Officio Jerry Red Jr. ABSENT: Harold Taylor and Vivian Olivier.
3. **Person to address the Committee:**
 - **Gary McGoffin** – *Attorney for Investigation of Employees Termination.*
“I was asked to discuss with you the status of the Ordinance which you have passed regarding the investigation concerning Human Resource practices. I have copies of the judgement which we received from Judge Conque and I will circulate that to you all. There are a lot of legals in the early part of the judgement but the important part is in the last paragraph. Just to breaif you again, we had a hearing with Judge Conque for a couple of hours, Judge Conque had several questions about the fire Ordinance which had been passed and reaching the ruling that he did. The Judge wrote down his motions on the various motions that we filed on behalf of the Council and were filed on behalf of Parish President. Those aren’t really relevent to the questions I been asked to address on tonight. Which is what can do you if anything with the Ordinance that was passed most recently. If you go to the last paragraph, the first sentence states, that the Petitioners application for Preliminary Injunction is hereby GRANTED, and the Defendant is ENJOINED from acting in furtherance of St. Landry Council Resolution No. 013 of 2023, which grants the authority to retain an Independent Resource Specialist to investigate the Human Resource Department, and any other St. Landry Parish Government departments, to determine that proper protocol was followed and that the terminations were justifiable, until a trial on the merits can be had. This Preliminary Injunction does not prohibit Defendant from acting in furtherance of any other resolution or ordinance. You have since adopted a new Ordinance and it was intended to address the concerns that Judge Conque had expressed and some of the issues we had discussed with him. So we have a new Ordinance that was passed and you are free to pursue that Ordinance and to implement it.”

Councilman Wayne Ardoin stated, *“Ok so this Council can proceed and go ahead and hire a HR person to continue with this process.”*

Legal Counsel Gary McGoffin stated, *“That is correct, you implement the last Ordinance passed and proceed with an investigation on those finds.”*

 - **Judge James Doherty addressed the Council,** *“Goodevening Council, I am here this evening to let you know I have considered and put in an application for the position you will be discussing on item #7 this evening for the position as a member of the board for Hospital Service District No. 2 of St. Landry Parish. I put in an application last year, it didn’t work out so well for me. When I saw it came up again this year I decided to reapply. I’m offering myself from the experience that I have, before I took the bench in 2005, I served as the General Council for 25 years for the Board of Directors of Opelousas General. I’m very familiar with the laws that deal with Hospital Service District as well as with Public Trust which is actually the Operating Entity of Opelousas General Hospital. I took the bench in 2005 and the Judicial Cannons did not allow me to continue in any involvement with the Hospital. When I retired in 2021 those provisions were removed and I am now eligible. I do serve on the Board of the Hospital Trust. I want to do this because Opelousas General is an interval part of our Community and our Parish. It is very important that we have a facility that can communicate and deliver excellent health care at*

prices that are reasonable that we can afford. There are a lot of challenges facing the Hospital in this State. We have a lot of challenges primarily with reimbursements, we serve a poor area compared to some of the other areas of the state. Those are the things we are focusing on now at the Hospital. Improving our delivery of healthcare to all of the population in this parish. I'm here this evening to first of all Thank You for giving me this opportunity and also asking for your consideration for a vote when this comes up in two weeks before the entire Council.

- **Quincy Richard Sr. addressed the council,** “Goodevening to the members of the audience, Parish President Mr. Jessie Bellard, Chairman Mr. Jerry Red Jr., Chair Mr. Coby Clavier, and other members of the Council. If there's some type of exchange I ask that it goes through the Chairman or the board or some type of committee. At this time I would like to say thank you for giving me the opportunity to stand before you to express my reservations about the agenda on June 21, 2023. My reservations are simple and I'm 100% sure that you all violated the Louisiana Statue RS 42:16 and I would like to read it as follows: I'm 100% sure that you all violated the acceptance to the Open's Meetings Law. A public body may hold an executive pursuant to R.S. 42:16 for one or more of the following reasons. I am charging you with three counts of the Open Meeting Law. The first one is discussions of the character, professional competence, physical or mental health of a person provided such a person is notified within at least 24 hours and that didn't happen to me. That's my first violation of the Opening Meeting Law. Before the schedule time contained in the notice of the meeting that which such Executive Session is to take place and that such a person may require that such a discussion be held in an open meeting. I tried to talk to you all but I wasn't given the choice. It simply says that if you will have an Executive Session it's up to the subject to say whether they want it in open session or closed session. I didn't get that right. The third offense that I will charge you with is however nothing in this paragraph shall permit executive session for a discussion of an appointment of a person to a public body. This is simply for an update. On June 28th, 2023, I went to the District Attorney office to file a complaint. The District Attorney wasn't available, they said he was going to return today and he did return today, I'm waiting on a phone call. Furthermore I went to the Attorney General cause that's the two people that says whether you all were in violation or not in violation. I'm waiting on a response. I'm more than sure, I'm 100% sure you all are in violation and you all took action, I wish you would wait until the District Attorney or the Attorney General say whether it was a nay or yea. I wish you all would have granted me the opportunity to make a small presentation but it is what it is. Judge Doherty and I have been knowing one another for years, he's a fine candidate and I just want to say I deserve that right as a candidate to serve on that board too but he is a fine candidate. It's nothing against him, he and I go back to the 80s but I know you are 100% wrong on the Opening Meeting Law. Before you all take any kind of action I wish you would wait until the District Attorney to make his ruling and then we just go from there. We still remain friends or whatever but I am 100% sure you all are in violation.

Chairman Jerry Red Jr. stated, “Mr. Chairman, I just want to elaborate a little bit on what happened. At our full council meeting a couple of council members a long with our Legal Counsel to my understanding presented our Parish President with a paper and he then handed it to Mr. Richard. And to my understanding we are 13 council members and if a council member do something it should still come to the chairperson and we should know what is going on in a meeting before getting into the meeting and find out something else is taking place and you don't know about it. Do anybody else know anything that was going on with this, that's not right? I still feel that number 1 if a person do not want to go into Executive Session they do not have to go into Executive Session. Is that correct Legal Counsel?”

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, “The person can decide and the Council can decide too but the Council does not have to go into Executive Session that is an option that they can use in certain circumstances and they would take into consideration what the subject matter in the Executive Session wants them to do.”

Chairman Jerry Red Jr. stated, “At the same time in an open meeting you have 24 hours to present to a person.”

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, “The person has to be notified 24 hours before the meeting that he is coming up. I think Mr. Richard knew more than 24 hours ahead of time that his appointment was coming up at the meeting.”

Chairman Jerry Red Jr. stated, “To my understanding, he received that letter about 2:00 p.m. the day of the meeting so that is not 24 hours. That is 4 hours before 6:00 p.m. Mr. Bellard can you elaborate on when did he receive that letter.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I am not sure on when he received it but I got it that morning. He did come to the office so I would say about 1:00 or 2:00p.m. right after lunch.”

Chairman Jerry Red Jr. stated, “So he got it that same day of the meeting, is that correct?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “That’s correct.”

Chairman Jerry Red Jr. stated, “So that is not 24 hours.”

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, “So he has to have 24 hours notice that his appointment is going to be addressed at the meeting. Mr. Richard did not receive a letter but he received a copy of the section of the Constitution State of Louisiana that states the qualifications for an appointment to a commission. I know that is what Mr. Richard received as information to him. The information on this particular appointment that was arrived that day perhaps I should have called every individual councilman before we knew there was an obstacle to let them know that this information had come up as I have done in the past. This is not something involving State Court in that courthouse, this is involving Federal Court so it took a while to get the information on the computer. We only have so much time to gather information before a meeting.”

Chairman Jerry Red Jr. stated, “But still with time if everyone needs to know.”

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, “Well everyone has to be in the loop and I called each individual councilman in the past on certain issues that I thought I had to talk to individually and I guess I should have done it here I will do that in the future.”

Chairman Jerry Red Jr. stated, “I just want to know the three charges that he is charging the Council with, how do you feel as far as the Council standing up against those three charges.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Mr. Chairman I really do not think Mr. Duplechain should be answering those questions in an open meeting like this which might lead to litigation. I’m just thinking and make sure we do not get ourselves in a bag here on this issue.”

Chairman Jerry Red Jr. stated, “Look I just want to know because we did not know number 1 because of what was being done by you and the other two councilmembers. You all put us in a loop but I am fine with it all I am asking is do not let it happen again. We stand before the people and I want to be represented as the person doing what is right, not second hand.”

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, “I do not want the council to misunderstand. Every single thing the council does in regards to this and everything else is civil. Everything I do for you all is civil law no of it bleeds into the criminal side of the law including making appointments to commissions.

Councilman Wayne Ardoin stated, “Mr. Bellard, Mr. Richard is an employee of Parish Government and you had a meeting with him before that meeting that day?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Yes he is and we had a meeting in the afternoon.”

Councilwoman Mildred Thierry stated, “I have a concern. I think when we made the decision, I do not know if it’s the information Mr. Red is referring to or not but we had some information presented to us at the council meeting by our legal advisor and I voted based on the information that was presented to us. We did not have the opportunity to look into anything it was just presented to us during the meeting. I just want this to be clear, I do not know about the others but I voted based on the information that was presented at that time by our legal advisor.

Ms. Lena Charles addressed the council stating, “Goodevening Chairperson, Parish Government and Council men and women thank you for allowing me a few minutes to come before you today. The reason that I am coming before you is because I am over the Opelousas Downtown Development as the Chairperson as I serve as the result as this council appointing me to the SLED board and re-appointing to the SLED board I serve in that capacity and I thank you all. I am committed to you all on a regular basis and come before periodically on the things that is going on with that appointment. What we have accomplished with Opelousas Downtown Development since 2018 when it was put together. We passed a heavy Ordinance with the City of Opelousas addressing non-residential vacant properties. The downtown has basically been closed over 35 years and we felt that we had Ordinance on the books and things that would have caused controversy so it was not to go back to where we were or why this or that but to pass something that had momentum to move our city forward. When you move the city, which is the seed of the parish, you move the parish forward so it is all connected. We employed an agency of CPEX (Center of Planning Excellence) to come up with best practices and from those best practices we drafted an Ordinance. The city attorney sat in on it. This was a request from the city itself that we get involved due to some complaints and misuse. I am trying to dismiss all the misinformation that goes around. It really sent a message about Opelousas and the people that are working for Opelousas that we are now open for business again. The seed of the parish is ready to do business and have business come back into the heart of our city. I am excited about that because we did what we were in charge to do and the results were such a positive momentum. We had a business forum for the businesses. Bring in the USDA, local business banks, and other institutions of lending as well as financial people to the table. People that want to start a business or people that is in business and struggling they can have an opportunity. It is not only for the city of Opelousas but anyone could have attended on last Wednesday and it was very successful. We sponsored a student expo bringing all the students to schools in St. Landry Parish and the students that were engaged in the arts from the choir, singing, the arts everything on the courthouse square. It was good to let the people know I have a beautiful courthouse and should be a destination point in having activities on the weekend. We participated with Parish Government, the Walking Ladies, ODD, and the permanent lighting of our trees. We can preserve the oaks they can stay the way they are and the courthouse the refurbishing Parish Government has undertaken will make a big change for years and years to come. We want this to be the destination point on weekends. We also engaged on the additional turning lane on Wallior Street, that was a requirement from DOTD. We found out also they did not have waste water and water on the East side of the Boagni property where Chick-Fil-A wanted to locate so that was one of our projects that we completed as well at no cost to the city or no cost to the parish. It was close to \$800,000.00 to make those initiatives so we could get that Chick-Fil-A and it is in the process. The ground is broken and they have a date of August 2023 but looks like it will be before August. Last thing I want to say between Court and Market street on the southside that sidewalk is another project we have now. We picked up this initiative which was a tax grant the city of Opelousas had since 2014 and 2018 we picked it up and thought we would be able to execute it right away but it had a lot of red tape and things does not move fast with DOTD and the grant only paid for these years later for that

portion that we are doing now. Originally it was granted for all around the courthouse and we will apply for some more funds to eventually do that as well. I thank you for having confidence in me as your chairperson to Downtown Development.”

Councilwoman Mildred Thierry stated, *“I wanted to personally thank you Ms. Charles for all that you do cause I follow you a lot on social media and just thank you for all that you do for the community. We appreciate you.”*

Councilman Wayne Ardoin stated, *“Thank you very much Ms. Lena for being here and I appreciate everything you trying to do. Are you all just responsible for the downtown area.”*

Ms. Lena Charles stated, *“Our corridor is 600ft off the corridor. Which is Main and Union street, Landry and Vine, we go to Super One and Martin Luther King, where the Yambilee split and Bullard to the entrance on 190 Lowes.”*

Councilman Wayne Ardoin stated, *“So you are saying that you all are responsible for some of the signage by Super One that’s on the south end of town. I represent the area of Park Vista and wanted to know if you all would do some markings on the road where people would know you get in the left lane you make a left on south Union headed south. If you get in right lane make a right on Union. Same thing on Creswell off of Jasmine and by the school board office you have only two lanes but where there are three lanes and there is a turning lane it causes some problems.”*

Ms. Lena Charles stated, *“Ok you are speaking of Union and Creswell.”*

Councilman Wayne Ardoin stated, *“Yes on Union and Creswell you have the light there and some markings there but I am also talking on Abdalla Blvd. where they turn left to go south and right to go north. There is no kind of lines where people can see which lane they have to get in.”*

Ms. Lena Charles stated, *“They have a turning lane on Creswell.”*

Councilman Wayne Ardoin stated, *“Yes that is true that’s a state highway but I am talking about subdivision itself.”*

Ms. Lena Charles stated, *“We do not go into subdivisions. First of all the city does roads and bridges. The reason we spent funds on Maillor was because it was for infrastructure. If we had extra money we could not provide infrastructure for the city because that is in our act that we can not do that. The Wallior situation we made a turning lane to bring in the infrastructure.”*

Councilman Wayne Ardoin stated, *“Thank you, you answered my question.”*

4. Parish President & Finance Report:

- **Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan Program**
Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “That will be some sewer improvements to the Royal Garden subdivision. That is the letter we received in the mail June 13, 2023. It is a 2.3 million dollar project and 1.75 million will be forgiven and the other 600 thousand we working with the sewer company for them to absorb that cost. They will be some details that will have to be worked out. It will not cost the parish any money and that program will go in place with Royal Gardens, that’s the old section of Royal Garden that was built in the 60s or 70s. The system that they had in place just not working anymore. This grant or program that we have will fix that problem. I will come back in near future with some more information.
- **CAFA’s Down Payment Assistance Program**
This helps with assistance with people in our parish and we have to have the CEA with them to apply for it.

A motion was made by Councilman Easton Shelvin, seconded by Councilman Timmy Lejeune to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, July 19th, 2023** authorizing Parish President Jessie Bellard to sign the CEA for CAFA's Down Payment Assistant Program.

On roll call vote: YEAS: Easton Shelvin, Dexter Brown and Timmy Lejeune.

NAYS: None. **ABSENT:** Harold Taylor and Vivian Olivier. **ABSTAINED:** None.

Motion forwarded.

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "The next thing is the finance report which is out of the new system so I am sure you all will have some questions when it comes around. Let us know we can sit down and show everyone how the new system operate to have a better understanding what the report will look like.

A motion was made by Councilman Timmy Lejeune, seconded by Councilman Easton Shelvin to accept the Parish President & Finance Report:

On roll call vote: YEAS: Easton Shelvin, Dexter Brown, and Timmy Lejeune.

NAYS: None. **ABSENT:** Harold Taylor and Vivian Olivier. **ABSTAINED:** None.

Motion carried.

5. **Deal with issues with applicants applying for Hospital Board.**

Administrative Finance Chairman Coby Clavier stated, "We discussed previously no action needs to be taken on this item."

6. **Forward to Regular Meeting all applications received for one appointment for a six-year term to Hospital District No. 2. (Opelousas General). All applicants must live in Ward 1. (District 1, 2, 3, 9, 10). (07-19-2023 – 07-19-2029).**

A motion was made by Councilman Easton Shelvin, seconded by Councilman Dexter Brown to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, July 19th, 2023** all applications received for one appointment for a six year term to Hospital District No. 2 (Opelousas General) All applicants must live in Ward 1 District 1, 2, 3, 9 10).

(07-19-2023 – 07-19-2029)

On roll call vote: YEAS: Easton Shelvin, Dexter Brown and Timmy Lejeune.

NAYS: None. **ABSENT:** Harold Taylor and Vivian Olivier. **ABSTAINED:** None.

Motion forwarded.

7. **Discuss updates and changing the verbiage to Ordinance No. 2023 – 009. (Councilman Easton Shelvin).**

An Ordinance to establish an Emergency Medical Service Advisory Board and terms and conditions for a permit for Ambulance Service Providers in St. Landry Parish.

Councilman Easton Shelvin stated, "It is still in discussion. Parish President Jessie Bellard has more updates.

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "We are in the process of drafting the new information that we met about a couple of weeks back. It is not complete yet but we have some ground to cover, it is just about done. Hopefully for the next committee meeting we will have more information."

8. **Discuss removing Oscar Rivette Road off No Truck or 18-Wheeler thru Traffic Ordinance.**

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, "We have discussed this and I think that Mr. Stelly agreed that Oscar Rivette Road has some heavy traffic on it. We would like to take it off the list for No Truck or 18 Wheeler thru traffic ordinance."

Chairman Jerry Red Jr., stated, “On this item, this was an ordinance that we adopted at our last full council meeting. We wanted to make some changes to that ordinance and I don’t think that it was properly done. They were talking about this road, Oscar Rivette.”

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, “That is correct, we will have that ordinance ready to be introduced two weeks from now.”

Chairman Jerry Red Jr., stated, “So that passage of that ordinance was not correct.”

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, “Correct, once you have that ordinance and final form you will have to have a public meeting before it is passed and everything that is in the ordinance have to be ready for public comment. It will be ready to be introduced two weeks from now.”

Chairman Jerry Red Jr., questioned, “Is that Iseringhausen Road?”

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, “No that was done. We will amend the ordinance to take Oscar Rivette Road off of the No Truck or 18 Wheeler Ordinance. It will be ready for introduction in two weeks from now.”

Council Clerk Sherell Jordan stated, “Last meeting it was passed but it was passed with the amendment to remove Oscar Rivette. We can’t pass it that way. We will have to bring both roads back up. Iseringhausen Road and Oscar Rivette.”

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, “In two weeks from today an ordinance to amend Oscar Rivette road will be ready for introduction and the amendment for Iseringhausen road will be brought back for a vote to pass it.”

9. Discuss doing a background check for all Boards and Appointments by St. Landry Parish Council.

Chairman Jerry Red Jr., stated, “I brought this up because we had issues with the Hospital Board Appointments. They want to do background checks so I think that we need to do a back ground checks on everyone. I believe that we had already set that up before to do a background check.”

Administrative Finance Chairman Coby Clavier questioned, “Do you want to forward that to the Full Council?”

Chairman Jerry Red Jr., stated, “Yes.”

A motion was made by Councilman Easton Shelvin, seconded by Councilman Timmy Lejeune to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, July 19th, 2023** authorizing a background check on every applicant that applies for any board.

On roll call vote: YEAS: Easton Shelvin, Dexter Brown and Timmy Lejeune.

NAYS: None. **ABSENT:** Harold Taylor and Vivian Olivier. **ABSTAINED:** None.

Motion forwarded.

10. Discuss Racino Funding. (Councilman Wayne Ardoin).

Councilman Wayne Ardoin stated, “Ms. Fulop, what is the total that we have received from the Racino at this time. I am talking about Parish Government after everybody gets their take.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Roughly about \$1,400,000.00 per year that goes into the Road Division.”

Councilman Wayne Ardoin stated, “Mr. Soileau just iterated a while ago that everything is going up, the cost of material, labor and everything. I would like for this council to look at the situation whereas we can go back to this casino and we could collect more money for Parish Government so we can place the additional funds in the Road and Bridge fund.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Can I ask that we form a little committee of some council members and we go and sit with Evangeline Downs first before we do anything.”

Councilman Wayne Ardoin stated, “Whatever it will take. I see where the ones that have road district is costing a lot of money to get some roads done. Material and labor is costing money. I also see where this casino is taking in more money now. This was set on what they had projected at that time. Leave it where it will come just to parish government to be used in the Roads and Bridges Fund.

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “If you all don’t mind putting a little committee together where we can set up a meeting with Ms. Carol. We can sit with her and discuss the issue before we bring it to the council.”

Administrative Finance Chairman Coby Clavier stated, “We can do that.”

11. Discuss Enforcing Restrictions in an Ordinance for Shawnee Farms Subdivision.

Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated, “Ms. Jordan, did they bring you anything else. This is the same copy that we had before.”

Council Clerk Sherell Jordan stated, “No, it is the same copy.”

Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated, “I would like to table this item. Ms. Jordan, I will ask that you do not place this item back on the agenda until I request it. Thanks.”

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

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “Mr. Bellard, I see where St. Martin Parish or Iberia Parish had received a grant for Blighted Property. It assisted homeowners in repairing. Have you heard anything? They received \$500,000.00 to assist with Blighted Property.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “No but I can check with the Parish President’s over there.”

13. Adjourn

A motion was made by Councilman Dexter Brown, seconded by Councilman Timmy Lejeune to adjourn the Administrative/Finance Committee Meeting.

On roll call vote: YEAS: Easton Shelvin, Dexter Brown and Timmy Lejeune.

NAYS: None. **ABSENT:** Harold Taylor and Vivian Olivier. **ABSTAINED:** None.

Motion carried.

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