**ST. LANDRY PARISH COUNCIL**

**ADMINISTRATIVE/FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 2nd, 2023**

**OLD CITY MARKET, 131 W. BELLEVUE ST.**

**OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA**

**ADMINISTRATIVE/FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

1. Councilman Harold Taylor called this meeting of the Administrative/Finance Committee of the St. Landry Parish Council to order.
2. Councilwoman Vivian Olivier led the Pledge of Allegiance & Invocation.
3. **Roll Call**: Harold Taylor, Vivian Olivier, Dexter Brown and Timmy Lejeune.

Ex-Officio Jerry Red Jr. **ABSENT:** Easton Shelvin & Coby Clavier.

1. **Person to address the Committee**:
* ***Mr. Ernest Blanchard*** addressed the council regarding fulfilling the vacant seat for District 13. He stated he has retired from Shell Oil Company after 34 years of service and he have served on the City Council in Eunice, Ward 3 for four years. He is planning on running for District 13 Councilman’s seat for the next coming election.
* ***Mr. Darrell Huckaby*** addressed the council regarding fulfilling the vacant seat for District 13. He served 21 years in the Army and retired in 1990. He worked as a Branch Manager for a Pest Control Company. He worked at Fort Johnson as a Coordinator and retired in 2015. He was an Auxiliary Policeman and he is now a Sergeant with the Eunice Police Reserve. He feels he would be an asset to District 13 and he ask the council for their consideration to nominate him for the vacant seat.

***Councilman Harold Taylor stated***, “Ms. Ellen Rhines was suppose to be here tonight but she has moved to North Carolina. Her Firm has referred a substitute but the substitute could not attend tonight because she had a prior commitment. It will be discussed later in the meeting.”

1. **Parish President & Finance Report**:

***Parish President Jessie Bellard stated***, “Something was brought to my attention this afternoon about the precincts. The state is requesting 28 precincts that are under 300 voters to merge. The State is saying if 19 out of the 28 precincts are not merged the Parish will have to pay for those elections. It will cost about $1,200.00 a precinct. I will forward you all a copy for your review and maybe we can make a decision at the full council meeting. I will forward this to Sherell and she will have a copy of the map on which precincts that they are requesting to be merged.”

***Chairman Jerry Red Jr., stated***, “You are saying that we have to merge because of the numbers. I am thinking that our Demographer was supposed to know about this, now we are right back at square one. Some of the areas were switched for the betterment of the people. Do you think that we still need to have a working relationship with the Registrar of Voters and the Clerk of Court? All three of us have to work together to get this to co-exist. The council only vote to make sure that is how they want it but they know more about different areas. We need to call a meeting and it needs to be done soon because election is two months away.”

***Parish President Jessie Bellard*** stated he can call a meeting next week so they can see what the recommendations are going to be. If nothing is done it will cost the Parish $22,000.00 per election.”

***Chairman Jerry Red Jr. stated***, “We can call a Special Meeting next week.”

***Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated***, “This does not change district lines, it only moves people in precincts.”

A motion was made by Councilman Timmy Lejeune, seconded by Councilwoman Vivian Olivier to accept the Parish President & Finance Report:

**On roll call vote: YEAS**: Vivian Olivier, Dexter Brown and Timmy Lejeune.

**NAYS:** None. **ABSENT**: Easton Shelvin and Coby Clavier. **ABSTAINED**: None.

**Motion carried.**

1. **Discuss hiring Attorney Ellen C. Rhines, HR Specialist to represent the Council for the Injunction filed by the Parish President.**

***Councilman Harold Taylor*** stated calls have been made to Ms. Ellen C. Rhines. After speaking to her law firm they recommended ***Ms***. ***Becky Rogers, MBA, SPHR***. The council was presented a copy of Ms. Rogers Bio and Mr. Taylor read the Bio. He stated Ms. Rogers has spent the past 35 years working in Senior Leadership Roles in Human Resource Management.”

***Chairman Jerry Red Jr***. requested that Ms. Becky Rogers come to the Special Meeting next week to address the council.

***Councilwoman Vivian Olivier stated***, “I make a motion to invite Ms. Rogers to come and address the council.

***There was no ‘Second from Councilman Dexter Brown nor Councilman Timmy Lejeune*.”**

***Chairman Jerry Red Jr., stated***, “I second. Before we go any further let’s check with our Legal Counsel. Can I second the motion?”

***Legal Counsel Garett Duplechain stated***, “The Ex-Officio can vote.”

***Chairman Jerry Red Jr., stated***, “I can make a second, is that correct?”

***Legal Counsel Garett Duplechain stated,*** “Yes.”

A motion was made by Councilwoman Vivian Olivier, seconded by Chairman Jerry Red Jr., to forward to Regular Meeting held on ***Wednesday, August 16th, 2023*** to invite Ms. Becky Rogers, MBA SPHR to come and address the council.

**On roll call vote: YEAS**: Jerry Red Jr., Harold Taylor and Vivian Olivier.

**NAYS:** Dexter Brown and Timmy Lejeune. **ABSENT**: Easton Shelvin and Coby Clavier.

**ABSTAINED**: None.

**Motion forwarded.**

1. **Discuss the payment from the first trial for Attorney Gary McGoffin.**

***Chairman Jerry Red Jr., stated*, “**I have Mr. McGoffin fees from the first court date that we had with him.”

***Parish President Jessie Bellard questioned,*** “What is the amount of the bill?”

***Councilman Harold Taylor stated***, “$15,737.62. Do we have a motion to send this to full council? We have to pay our debt.”

***“No action was taken by the council to forward this bill to the full council for payment***.”

**Motion dies from a lack of a motion.**

1. **Discuss doing a Background Check for all Boards and Appointments by St. Landry Parish Council.**

***Councilman Dexter Brown stated,*** *“*What would be the cost for these background checks per

 Individual? What would St. Landry Parish Government have to sustain for these background

check fees?”

***Parish President Jessie Bellard stated***, “We don’t want to pay for any background checks.

The employees pay for their own background check whenever they get hired. It is $18.00

 if they go to the Sheriff’s Office. Once it is completed they bring us back the completed copy.”

A motion was made by Councilman Dexter Brown, seconded by Councilman Timmy Lejeune

to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, August 16th, 2023** to authorize Background

Check for all applicants that apply for Boards.

**On roll call vote: YEAS**: Vivian Olivier, Dexter Brown and Timmy Lejeune.

**NAYS:** None. **ABSENT**: Easton Shelvin and Coby Clavier. **ABSTAINED**: None.

**Motion forwarded.**

1. **What is the status of meeting with Race Track Personnel about Finances? (Councilman Wayne Ardoin).**

***Councilman Wayne Ardoin stated***, “Ms. Ledoux was supposed to set up a meeting. At the last committee meeting we had discussed that we would meet with the people at the race track to try to get more funds from the race track proceeds for Parish Government to put on roads. I don’t think that meeting was ever set up. I am asking that we possibly get it set up so we can discuss this.”

***Parish President Jessie Bellard stated***, “Evangeline Downs Racetrack and Casino does not decide how much they give us, it is done by State Statue. The law would have to change. I did speak with Evangeline Downs and I would have to get with their Cooperate Office to see if they would come down and meet with us. I did print out the Revenue from day one up until now and their revenue is down, the people are not going to the casino like they use to. The Racino cannot tell us if they can pay us more or not because it has to be done by the State Legislature.”

***Councilman Wayne Ardoin stated***, “I am looking out for this parish to see if we can get more money from the Racino and put that funding on some roads. We still have roads that are in dire need of repair. I want to look at the situation. If we need to get something with the Legislature let’s start the ball rolling.”

***Parish President Jessie Bellard stated,*** “I am not in favor of asking Evangeline Downs for funding but if you all pass it as a motion I will do it.”

***Councilman Wayne Ardoin stated,*** I would like to discuss it. They have a lot of gravel roads in the parish that I would like to see paved.”

***Councilman Harold Taylor stated***, “Do we have a motion to meet with Racetrack personnel to discuss finances?”

***Motion dies from a lack of a motion.***

1. **Discuss the removal of the Statue.**

***Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated*, “**I would like to ask the council if they would be in favor of making that a Memorial for all Military, not just one but everybody that may have served or passed away. Make it a Memorial for everyone that served in the Military from St. Landry Parish, rather than tearing it down or removing it. We have a statue on HWY 182 and it does not bother anyone.”

***Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated***, “We have a lot of military people that are honored at the Veterans Site on HWY 182. I think that would be an appropriate place for the statue if that is what they want to do but it should not be at the court house. We already gave it away so we need to resolve that issue. We gave it to the Sons and the Daughters. Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated that she did research on the Meaning of a Confederate Monument and she read the findings to the council.”

***Councilwoman Mildred Thierry stared,***“The last time the issue came up about forwarding the discussion about the Statue to the Committee Meeting to move forward, I abstained and it was an ‘Aww” with some. My reason for doing so is because of the fact that when we first got started I had a few who called me, not many but the few who called stressed that is does not really matter to them whenever way that it may go. I had not heard any other concerns. As we progress along the way I began to hear from other constituents and realized that it was important to some. With me trying to be fair with my constituents I decided that at that point until I get more information, not conflicting information that the best thing for me to do at that time is to abstain. That is why I abstained that particular night.”

***Chairman Jerry Red Jr., stated***, “On April 21st, 2022 I have a letter that was given to all of us from Mr. James Bellard. It reads, *I am writing this letter so there will be an accurate written record of my offer to St. Landry Parish Government regarding the removal of the above reference statue. I have noticed that you all have repeatedly said in the public meeting that no one is willing to remove the statue. As you all know that is not true. I have offered to remove the statue at no cost to St. Landry Parish Government. Last night St. Landry Parish Council voted 9 to 3 to instruct and authorize you to remove the statue. As a result of that vote you have the authority to accept the following proposal. I am willing that St. Landry Parish Government donate the statue to me. I will carefully remove the statue and place it in a safe storage for up to one year. I will agree that I will turn over the statue to the person or entity designated by Parish Government at any time during that one year period providing that the person or entity reimburse me $15,000.00 for my work in removing the statue plus $500.00 per month for every month that statue remains in storage. The person or entity receiving the statue will be responsible for hiring someone to remove the statue from storage, the cost of removal from storage and the cost for relocating the statue from storage. At the end of a one year period if no one or no entity have designated by Parish Government to receive the statue I will accept the statue giving in payment for the cost of removal and storage of the statue. This would not be a donation it would be a payment of a debt by an in time payment. All that I ask form the Parish Government is a certificate of insurance. My alternative proposal is that I will remove the statue from the courthouse square for a cost to the parish of $15,000.00 and I will accept the statue as payment for the removal. Again, this is not a donation but an in time payment for service. You have told the council and the media that no one wants to remove the statue, if your statements are true the removal for the statue does not have to be bid. You can accept this proposal under the sole source doctrine. I am copying all Parish Council Members so that they will have a clear and fair explanation of my proposal. I believe this proposal is fair and does not present any legal problems what so ever. This proposal is the best interest of St. Landry Parish and it is consistent with your obligations to fulfill the wishes expressed by the council. Again I hope you Mr. Bellard will use the authority given to you by the Parish Council in last night 9 to 3 vote to do the right thing for the Citizens of St. Landry Parish and accept this proposal.* The only problem that I have with this is that the council took action over 1 ½ years ago. Over the period of time we have a tendency to want to change our minds and go another direction. I don’t have a problem with that. Whatever way this council so choose to go we should not hold nothing on anyone else head but that person should be responsible for themselves for whatever decision that hey make. St. Landry Parish is a large parish and you have some people may want to keep the statue and some want it removed. Deep down in your heart you should know who you are. In regardless of a statue or not you should know who you are. We as 12 councilmembers now need to make the right decision. Whatever decision that you make I am still fine with it but we need to move forward.”

***Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated*, “**I make a motion that we forward the further discussion of the statue to the Full Council.

***Councilwoman Vivian Olivier stated*,** “I second that motion.”

***Councilman Harold Taylor stated*, “**Mr. Lejeune you also stated that you wanted to look at repurposing it instead of removing it. If we go that route and I am just talking, we need to talk about the particulars. We need to form a committee of folks that are involved in this discussion. We gave the statue to the Sons of Confederacy so we need to get folks from that group and we need to get folks that are wanting to remove, maybe equal members to get the particulars on how we progress with this and how we will put this together and report back to the council.

***Chairman Jerry Red Jr., questioned***, “The discussion should be in the committee and you move it to the full council to take action. This is where you should do your discussion, right now and now you want to move it to the full council to discuss even more. I believe we are l over the place with the motion.

***Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated***, “I would like to make a motion that we form a committee from every side. If they want to re-face it, deface it, add a plaque to it or leave the pelican standing on top we can have that discussion so we can get to the end of this.

***Councilman Harold Taylor stated***, “Your motion is to form a committee of 6 members. Three members from Public Works and Three members from Administrative Finance to sit down and come to the council with a proposal. Ms. Carriere will lead that committee for the council.”

A motion was made by Councilman Timmy Lejeune, seconded by Councilwoman Vivian Olivier to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, August 16th, 2023** to authorize the council to form a Committee consisting of three members from Public Works and three members from Administrative Finance to further discuss the Removal of the statue. Councilwoman Nancy Carriere will lead the committee.

**On roll call vote:** **YEAS**: Vivian Olivier, Dexter Brown and Timmy Lejeune.

**NAYS:** None. **ABSENT**: Easton Shelvin and Coby Clavier. **ABSTAINED**: None.

**Motion forwarded.**

1. **Forward to Regular Meeting RESOLUTION NO. 023-2023.**

A Resolution approving the holding of an election in Fire Protection District No. 1 of the Parish of St. Landry, State of Louisiana, on Saturday, November 18, 2023 to authorize the renewal of a special tax therein.

A motion was made by Councilman Timmy Lejeune seconded by Councilwoman Vivian Olivier to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, August 16th, 2023** to approve **Resolution NO. 023-2023**.

A Resolution approving the holding of an election in Fire Protection District No. 1 of the Parish of St. Landry, State of Louisiana, on Saturday, November 18, 2023 to authorize the renewal of a special tax therein.

**On roll call vote: YEAS**: Vivian Olivier, Dexter Brown and Timmy Lejeune.

**NAYS:** None. **ABSENT**: Easton Shelvin and Coby Clavier. **ABSTAINED**: None.

**Motion forwarded.**

***Parish President Jessie Bellard stated*, “**Just to be clear is this a renewal for next year’s taxes for Fire District 1?”

***Councilman Harold Taylor stated*, “**Yes it is a renewal.”

***Parish President Jessie Bellard stated*, “**Just to give you all a little bit of information the taxes that will be on the election in November, we will probably have to skip a year of collections because it was called two late and it failed last year so it will be on next year’s tax notices if it passes. This one is a renewal so this one will be okay. It is Fund 42 and Fund 28, they will not collect this year’s money because it is too late.”

***Councilman Wayne Ardoin stated***, “That is in District 9 and District 10. Would it be possible and now is the time for us to hold back the funds or pro-rate the election because the election is in November. Our road fund will have to pay for that election. I am asking this committee to look at holding back a pro-rate on what the election would cost so that the cost of the election would be paid for out of that taxing district.”

***Parish President Jessie Bellard stated***, “It is already done. We took care of that.”

1. **Discuss any other business properly brought before this committee.**

***Councilman Dexter Brown stated*, “**Last week at the NACO Convention an attorney from the group was speaking to us and informed us that it would be beneficial to us to join a class action lawsuit. His name is Clay Jenkins and he is with Loncar Lyon Jenkins, Attorneys at Law. It is about Medicaid Billing for Insulin. The State of Louisiana could receive funding. I would like for you to look into it and Give Mr. Clay Jenkins a call. I would like the council to get involved in this class action law suit regarding the charging of insulin to individuals. Personal Insurance and Medicaid Billing. It is like they are triple billing everyone. It is a class action lawsuit that is going on now. His Toll Free Number is:

 800-285-4878.”

A motion was made by Councilman Timmy Lejeune, seconded by Councilwoman Vivian Olivier to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, August 16th, 2023** to authorize Legal Counsel Garett Duplechain to Contact Attorney Clay Jenkins of Loncar Lyon Jenkins,
Attorney at Law to get more information regarding the Class Action Lawsuit for Billing for Insulin.

**On roll call vote: YEAS**: Vivian Olivier, Dexter Brown and Timmy Lejeune.

**NAYS:** None. **ABSENT**: Easton Shelvin and Coby Clavier. **ABSTAINED**: None.

**Motion forwarded.**

***Councilman Harold Taylor stated*, “**Mr. Duplechain would you like to update us on any litigations?”

***Legal Counsel Garett Duplechain stated***, “Is there any litigations that you are referring about?”

***Councilman Harold Taylor stated***, “You have a report. What do you have?”

***Legal Counsel Garett Duplechain stated, “***Even though it is not on the agenda are you referring to the lawsuit that was filed against St. Landry Parish Government by the former Animal Control Director?”

***Councilman Harold Taylor stated***, “Yes.”

***Legal Counsel Garett Duplechain stated, “***It is a pending litigation and I can’t really comment on it. I became aware of it over 10 days ago since our last meeting and it

is being handled.”

***Councilman Harold Taylor stated***, “Do you think that we need to go into Executive Session and you can give us the details?”

***Legal Counsel Garett Duplechain stated,* “**We can’t go into Executive Session today. It was not on the Agenda.”

***Councilman Harold Taylor stated, “***Shouldn’t you had advised us about that before tonight and we could have gone into Executive Session and discussed this? You don’t think so? So we are in the dark about this, only you know about it?”

***Legal Counsel Garett Duplechain stated, “***It is a pending litigation. It is being handled.”

***Councilman Harold Taylor stated, “***I understand that but typically our Attorney informs us

about what is going on. If we personally have liability in this and I would like to know that.”

***Legal Counsel Garett Duplechain stated,*** “You can put it on the agenda for the next meeting and then we can go into Executive Session. There are only certain circumstances where you are able to go into Executive Session.”

***Councilman Harold Taylor stated, “***You are suggesting that we have a motion to send to the full council to go into Executive Session to discuss possible litigations, is that correct?”

***Legal Counsel Garett Duplechain stated,*** “You can do that if you want to.”

***Councilman Harold Taylor stated, “***Were we going to know about this? You are our attorney and you represent us. Who are you representing? What do you mean we can do this? Don’t you suggest that we do this?”

***Legal Counsel Garett Duplechain stated,*** “Yes.”

***Councilman Harold Taylor stated,*** *“*Do we have a motion to send this to full council so we can go into Executive Session and discuss possible litigations against the council.”

***Chairman Jerry Red Jr., stated,*** “You can have a litigation report on the full council meeting. At that litigation report at the end of the council meeting of the litigation report pertaining going into executive session we can go into executive session, is that correct?”

***Legal Counsel Garett Duplechain stated, “***Yes, it will state on the agenda that our clerk will produce that we are going into Executive Session.”

A motion was made by Councilman Harold Taylor, seconded by Chairman Jerry Red Jr., to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, August 16th, 2023** to authorize the council to enter into Executive Session to discuss the lawsuit filed on the St. Landry Parish Government by the former Animal Control Director.

**On roll call vote: YEAS**: Vivian Olivier, Dexter Brown and Timmy Lejeune.

**NAYS:** None. **ABSENT**: Easton Shelvin and Coby Clavier. **ABSTAINED**: None.

**Motion forwarded.**

1. **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, Harold Taylor, Vivian Olivier, Dexter Brown, and Timmy Lejeune. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT**: None. **ABSTAINED**: None.

**Motion carried.**

**I HEREBY CERTIFY THE FOREGOING TO BE EXACT AND TRUE**

**KAREN BARLOW, ASSISTANT COUNCIL CLERK**