

**ST. LANDRY PARISH COUNCIL
ADMINISTRATIVE/FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JULY 3, 2024
OLD CITY MARKET, 131 W. BELLEVUE ST.
OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA**

ADMINISTRATIVE/FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

1. Administrative/Finance Chairman Harold Taylor called this meeting of the Administrative/Finance Committee of the St. Landry Parish Council to order.
2. **Roll Call:** Nancy Carriere, Faltery Jolivette, Harold Taylor, Ken Marks, and Ernest Blanchard. Ex-Officio Wayne Ardoin. **ABSENT:** Dexter Brown.
3. **Person to address the Committee.**
None.
4. **Parish President & Finance Reports:**

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "You all should have a copy in your folder."

Administrative/Finance Chairman Harold Taylor, "I was browsing through it and I have a couple of questions. On the second page 6, the Prisoner Supplies, we budgeted \$7,500.00 and we spent \$37,327.10, we kind of over budgeted 498%. Do we need to amend the budget to cover that?"

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "No Sir."

Administrative/Finance Chairman Harold Taylor, "We don't."

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "No Sir."

Administrative/Finance Chairman Harold Taylor, "That is more than 5%."

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "We don't do by line item we do by total budget. It is not by line item."

Councilman Ken Marks stated, "It is not by line item."

Administrative/Finance Chairman Harold Taylor, "Okay, we have a couple of other questions. We do total budget, I thought when we were 5% over."

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "Over total budget."

Administrative/Finance Chairman Harold Taylor, "Okay. I have a question on page 2. It says Transfer-In Fund 52, \$103,390.00 and we budgeted \$30,000.00 can you tell us what all of that is about?"

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "I would have to pull the records to see. I don't have them in front of me but I can pull the records in the morning."

Administrative/Finance Chairman Harold Taylor, "Alright. On page 3, Building & Grounds, we budgeted \$79,170.00 and we spent \$170,457.56. Do you want to give us some clarity on that?"

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "We are doing work in the Courthouse. We have a lot of work going on in the Courthouse with the renovations. So that is where it is coming from."

Administrative/Finance Chairman Harold Taylor, “But it is not in the budget, that amount? We budgeted \$70,170.00 and we spent \$170,457.56, right?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Again it is the total budget.”

Administrative/Finance Chairman Harold Taylor, “Okay, sliding on down to Lease Equipment. We budgeted \$1,500.00 and we spent \$9,100.00, is that the same answer?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Yes, it is very simple. As long as it is at the end of the year and my budget comes in within 5% I am good.”

Administrative/Finance Chairman Harold Taylor, “Okay, thank you. Is there anyone else? Do we have a motion to accept the Parish President’s Report?”

A motion was made by Councilman Ken Marks, seconded by Councilman Ernest Blanchard to accept the Parish President & Finance Report

On roll call vote: YEAS: Nancy Carriere, Faltery Jolivette, Ken Marks and Ernest Blanchard. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** Dexter Brown. **ABSTAINED:** None.
Motion carried.

5. Discuss the sale of Bonds for Road 1 of 11A - Fund 42. (Chairman Wayne Ardoin)

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “Mr. Bellard, when can we start the process on selling those Bonds being the taxes were renewed? Can we get with Mr. LeFleur?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I can call him and see. I can call him tomorrow to see when is his earliest? It is anticipated for this year for collection. I think we can do it now.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “I would like to get started. We still have some complaints on Flagstation Road and Suzanne Dejean Dr. They need some repairs.

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Right.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “I see where I have \$298,000.00 in the fund but that is still not enough to be able to do a project if you are going to do it half way.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Oh I agree. Even bonding out the money is not going to be a lot of money.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “But still I would like to see one of them of both of them done.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I have to look at the bigger picture. I have to look at maintenance and stuff.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “I understand, I totally understand but I would like for it to be on record that we tried to move this thing forward.”

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

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “My question was answered Mr. Taylor you can move on.”

6. Discuss the Background Check Information on all Board Appointments. (Councilman Faltery Jolivette)

Councilman Faltery Jolivette stated, “What I am asking is, especially being the new kid on the block, is that people that we are appointing to these boards we don’t know what their qualifications are and what their experiences are and as I said last time I am kind of old school and I kind of want to look at their faces and we want to ask if there are any questions for us to ask them we can ask them. This is not an interview, just a fact to face

that they present themselves as Mr. Fontenot did tonight which was impressive. That is my point to have our perspective appointees to present themselves.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “On the background check of these applications do we accept or do we have the option for them to do it electronically for submitting an application or is it all by mail?”

Council Clerk Sherell Jordan stated, “No, they can’t do it electronically. They have to go in person.

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “In person meaning hand deliver it to you.”

Council Clerk Sherell Jordan stated, “They can e-mail it to me but they have to do their back ground check at the jail.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “I am not talking about background. I am talking about the general application.”

Council Clerk Sherell Jordan stated, “Yes, I can e-mail them an application and they can e-mail it back to me.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “Okay, thank you. I was not aware of that.”

Councilman Faltery Jolivette stated, “I fail to mention that I spoke to the Council Clerk Ms. Jordan about the applications that we get on the request for criminal history. The Social Security Number do not be or scratched out when it is presented to us. That is pretty potent information that we don’t need. I was going to ask the council to see fit that we would omit that, they need that information but we don’t need it so we could omit that information to the council. I would like to make a motion that those two items be considered to we vote on it.”

Council Clerk Sherell Jordan stated, “I can blacken it out with a marker.”

Councilman Faltery Jolivette stated, “Just so we don’t get that information, I would not want my personal information before the board.”

A motion was made by Councilman Faltery Jolivette, seconded by Councilman Ken Marks to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, July 17th, 2024** to authorize the Council Clerk to blank out the Social Security Number on all Board Appointment’s Back Ground Check information before it is presented to the council.

On roll call vote: YEAS: Nancy Carriere, Faltery Jolivette, Ken Marks and Ernest Blanchard. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** Dexter Brown. **ABSTAINED:** None.

Motion forwarded.

7. Discuss the Litigation with Clerk of Court regarding Parish Government Paying Mandated Expenses at the Clerk of Court facilities.

Councilman Faltery Jolivette stated, “I did ask at the last meeting Mr. President what were we responsible for to the Clerk’s Office. You said that you would look further into that. Did you find anything Sir?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “The only thing that we have is what the statue calls far and honestly that is it. There is no statue that mandates us to provide Operating Expenses to the Clerk of Court. It is pretty detail and there is the Attorney General’s Opinion and case law that states the furnishing and stuff like that that we can pay for upon request and it has to be reasonable. Nothing in there about us paying for a building or adding on to another building, none of that stuff. So my suggestion to the council was to not authorize anything. First of all we don’t have the money to give them and we are not required to. I expressed my opinion yesterday to the Chief Deputy and I instructed them to provide documentation of what their request is. They submitted me a letter for \$50,000.00 and said they want their money. Now that this have come to light I am asking

for them to put a detailed report and let us know what they want the money for and for what reason. From there we can decide.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “Mr. Bellard, this is the Attorney General Opinion?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I think Mr. Duplechain gave you all a copy of research that he had put together.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “So this is not the Attorney General’s Opinion?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “No he had a couple of court cases that he references in here for the Police Jury. One of them being with St. Landry Parish.”

Councilman Ken Marks questioned, “Garett gave you something.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “No so much as it fits just for the Clerk of Court but just in mandated Expenses in general.

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “I know you had said that you were getting an opinion.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Not on the Clerk of Court stuff.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “Okay, I thought that is what you were waiting on.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin questioned, “Mr. Bellard, are we still going to move that building for the Clerk of Court that you had that special meeting about?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Yes, I am not sure if Barry talked to them lately but Barry has more information.”

Mr. Barry Soileau, Public Works Director stated, “We are going to tear it down as soon as we possibly can.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin questioned, “We will have some money involved in that right?”

Mr. Barry Soileau, Public Works Director stated, “Yes.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “Do you have an estimate?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “We will do it ourselves.”

Mr. Barry Soileau, Public Works Director stated, “We will do it ourselves.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “Okay, thank you.”

Chairman Faltery Jolivette questioned, “Would you suggest that we wait on this opinion?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “As of right now that is no litigation. There is nothing.”

Chairman Faltery Jolivette stated, “So it is pretty etched about the responsibility.

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “There is nobody that filed any litigation and there is no reason for us to file because we are not making no request. I just don’t feel that we are obligated to pay for half of that remodeling project over there. We are and we did submit to the Federal Government asking for a grant to pay for the whole thing for them and that is what we had agreed upon back in February when we sat down with them. I would not mind doing what I can to help them to get money from the Federal Government

through a Grant Process and that is what we did. It takes a little while for that to take place but us paying for it, we never agreed to that.”

Administrative/Finance Chairman Harold Taylor, “So Mr. Bellard you are saying you got a grant to buy the building or refurbish it?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Actually we applied for a grant to do it through the archives.

Administrative/Finance Chairman Harold Taylor, “How much was the grant?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “We are asking for the whole \$1,200,000.00.”

Administrative/Finance Chairman Harold Taylor, “It is in the process.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Yes sir, we are asking for it. That is what we agreed upon in our February meeting. I did not offer anything from Parish Government but I did offer that we help get a grant to help them pay for the whole thing and that is what we did, we applied for it and they know that it takes a little while for them to give us their approval or disapproval on the Federal side.

Administrative/Finance Chairman Harold Taylor, “It would seem that if we applied for it we would own the building.

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “No sir, we are just helping him. We are helping him with his expenses because we have Grant Writers.”

Administrative/Finance Chairman Harold Taylor, “So it goes back to the scenario with the sewer treatment plant. We got a Capital Outlay Grant for \$1,500,000.00 for this project and CSLED put up \$2,500,000.00 and we decided that we are going to keep it. It seems like we are trailing on the same trail here.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I decided that we are going to keep it because it was not done properly to start off with which is what the law calls far.”

Administrative/Finance Chairman Harold Taylor, “You decided that, alright.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “And evidently everybody agrees.”

Administrative/Finance Chairman Harold Taylor, “Thank you so much.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “I know you said there is no litigation have you all had any kind of communications since? I know if we say that we are not going to pay anything then he might come back and say something else because his attorney did come here. I am just trying to figure out what is going to happen. He is probably not going to settle for what we are talking about. I am just wondering what our next step is. What is it that we are going to be doing?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “There is no step for us. If he is not comfortable and not happy with the decision then he can file a lawsuit and bring it back. Number 1: We don’t have the money to give him for that and Number 2: We don’t have too. So I am not saying anything because I don’t have nothing to say. I am not doing it.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “I was just wondering. If he does file a lawsuit then we will be back into that.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “We get sued every week. There is one thing about Government people think Government have a lot of money and every time somebody twist their ankle they want to sue us. So all I do is get the lawsuit and bring it to Garrett and from there it takes its course. That is Government.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “Do we have any idea what amount of records that the Clerk of Court needs to have stored and if we don’t could we find out and could we find out what is the necessary square footage for that or requirements for that?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I will be honest with you.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “It’s irrelevant.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “It is not irrelevant to me if I go and spend the money.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “Let me just say this. It was mentioned that the third floor was allocated to storage of some records is that correct?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Yes Sir. All of the west side of the third floor.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “That is a lot of square footage is it not.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Yes Sir.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “I know that it is not climate control is that correct?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Not all of it, yes Sir.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “Okay, it seems that it would behoove use and them to take a look at what it would cost to get that area allocated with some type of climate control and something to preserve and protect these records at a way less cost than \$1,200,000.00.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I don’t think that \$1,200,000.00 is for the actual storage. It is for the second floor to rent out to generate revenue. If it was not for that second floor then it would be no reason to renovate or spend that kind of money.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “That is correct, okay, thank you.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “I am glad Mr. Marks brought that up. I know that we have talked about that. It is kind of ridiculous. My question is this: What if we just hold on to the responsibilities that we do have in the mandated part, why can’t we just put all of those records and that way we won’t be dealing with all that other stuff that he might be charging us for?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “So keep in mind that we have records on the third floor. All of the west side of the courthouse from one end to the north and south is Clerk of Court files. Down stairs in the basement there are some more Clerk of Court files. What is over there to my understanding is archives which is the purpose of having that building, if you look at it is archives. They need to be there regardless because there is where he wants people to go to research their families and everything else. What is there from what I understand needs to be there for what his purpose of having the archives section. We have our files upstairs, we have plenty room and we cleaned it out maybe two months ago. We had Trustees to go up there and help the Clerk of Court and their staff clean out what is not needed and made shelving available and whatever was needed to make it fit. We added another safe up there for some goods.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “So none of his files are going to be stored on the third floor anymore?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “There is room on the third floor for some of his files or whatever he wants to put or what they want to put, yes ma’am. They still have room on the third floor. What I am say is what is over there to my knowledge is suppose to be archives which is what the whole purpose of it.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “Mr. Bellard, how much room do you think they have up there?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I am going to say probably at least 50 feet of storage from the south end of the Courthouse up and then some more from the door going out, probably about 70 feet of storage area with the shelving that they could put stuff on. We took stuff out of there from the Assessor’s Office and moved it on the third floor on the other end where Sherry is at. She needs to have it close to here so we made room there. We just made extra room and threw out what is not needed.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin questioned, “So what else is upstairs besides Public Records?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “There is the Clerk of Court’s Records and Judge Cravins Office.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “His office which was Judge LaHay’s old office.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “No Sir that is that new office, that new courtroom on that northeast corner of the courthouse.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “Thank you.”

Councilman Faltery Jolivette stated, “Mr. Bellard so we have meet our responsibility for the Clerk’s Office as far as what we suppose to give him is that right?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I am going to take this position that we are doing everything that we can and we have always done everything that we can with the space that we have available to us. I think at this point I think we have meet that obligation as far as storage of records.”

Councilman Faltery Jolivette stated, “If that grant is awarded to you I understand, I don’t know if Mr. Taylor was quite clear and we all understood you were just assisting in giving these funds it was not for us it was just our writers were helping him.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Helping him get the grant for the archives section.”

Councilman Faltery Jolivette stated, “So when he gets the money it is his money to do what he needs to be done.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “It will be done through his office that is correct. It has nothing to do with Parish Government because we get to that same problem that we have had in the past.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “Basically archives was mentioned does that qualify for protection via the historical society for records? If it does isn’t there state funding to assist with that?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “The archive section is the reason why we are pushing on the Federal Level for the grants for that same reason you are saying.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “Thank you.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “Mr. Bellard, Mr. Jagneaux stated the other night that he got \$100,000.00 from us this past year.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “In 2023, yes Sir.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “So now he is asking for another \$50,000.00. He mentioned \$50,000.00 just now.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “He is asking for \$150,000.00, yes sir.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “Now the years before that he mentioned that he was not getting any money from us at all. He have not come to us requesting any money.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “That is correct, there are a lot of years where there was no money requested at all.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “Can you give us that amount of the last time that he received some money and bring us up to date on it.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I can give you all a breakdown of whatever times that we had, yes that is fine.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “If you remember they would always do a request, the Judicial System, him and the rest of them that were getting monies from us.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Last year it was \$100,000.00 and this year he is asking for \$100,000.00 and the other night he asked for an extra \$50,000.00. The question that came up was: Why all of a sudden we changed? Whenever somebody makes a request to pay half of something we will do our own research and find out what we are obligated to pay. In doing the research we are finding out that we are obligated to pay certain things upon request and it has to be reasonable. If you don’t know it you just do what you have to do but once you know it you have to follow the law and that is what we are doing.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “Ms. Nancy had a perfect example the other night. If she adopted a child and find out that some things are needed to be done at her house it is a little late in the game. Thank you.”

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

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere questioned, “Mr. Bellard, when are we going to get the report on salaries? We have not received them yet. We requested that a couple of month back about the salaries.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I thought that was already done but I will check in the morning.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “Okay, thank you.”

9. Adjourn.

A motion was made by Councilman Ken Marks, seconded by Councilman Ernest Blanchard to adjourn the Administrative/Finance Committee Meeting.

On roll call vote: YEAS: Nancy Carriere, Faltery Jolivette, Ken Marks and Ernest Blanchard. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** Dexter Brown. **ABSTAINED:** None.
Motion carried.

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