

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

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

1. Public Works Chairwoman Vivian Olivier called this meeting of the Public Works Committee of the St. Landry Parish Council to order.
2. Pledge of Allegiance & Invocation. (Councilman Ken Marks)
3. **Roll Call:** Nancy Carriere, Mildred Thierry, Ken Marks, Vivian Olivier and Jimmie Edwards. Ex-Officio Wayne Ardoin. **ABSENT:** Jody White, Alvin Stelly and Timmy Lejeune.
****Councilwoman Nancy Carriere and Councilman Ken Marks sat on the Public Works Committee to make a quorum.**

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

Mr. Jacob Jarrell addressed the council to discuss zoning. He stated, “Good evening. I was asked to come here today. I guess there were some questions about zoning in the parish.

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “Mr. Jarrell, I wanted to ask you a couple of questions. I have been getting a lot of concerns from different people about zoning. They wanted to know the process and how difficult is it in certain areas or subdivisions. Maybe you can elaborate on what is exactly involved in zoning in the parish.”

Mr. Jacob Jarrell stated, “As far as zoning I would recommend not too. Our parish is mostly rural and I would recommend not to zone our parish. I don’t think there is any parish that really have zoning within the parish at least not anywhere that touches us. That is a big reach in my opinion for government to do now. If it is concerning subdivisions then that would go more along with our subdivision ordinance that you all have in place if you all would want to modify that but as far as zoning in which you can tell people what they can and cannot do, I would not.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “I just wanted to know more about it. I have a lot of people that asked me about it and I don’t have the answers. I needed to ask someone and you are the one. Also, I know that we had an issue when the Solar System was coming in. I remember Mr. Bellard stated that we don’t have zoning so that is why I wanted to know what was entailed?”

Mr. Jacob Jarrell stated, “It is not really much to say. We are not the only parish that struggles with that but I know I have seen a bigger fight when it is there. The city have zoning but that is different it is more urban. Within city limits they have it but in Lafayette Parish they don’t have it or anything like that.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “So the main reason you would not recommend it is because of the task it would take?”

Mr. Jacob Jarrell stated, “The task, I don’t how you would really zone our parish. When you get outside city limits it is mostly rural, agriculture. Zoning is not really my area, it is mostly a planning thing. There are some things that you would not want to see maybe that would be something that you would want to bring to a Planning Commission. The Acadiana Planning Commission does the whole area, they looked into that. When I was helping Sunset with their Planning Commission they had Acadiana Planning Commission come in and help them within their city limits. I know they had a good idea about all of that.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “Okay, I will pass it on. I just needed to know what was entailed and more about zoning.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “The zoning for businesses for Economic Development issues along I-49 and things of that nature and future growth do those fit the criteria of the municipalities that are different from the parish?”

Mr. Jacob Jarrell stated, “No, from what I understand is that they take the stance along the I-49 Corridor, they want that to be commercial. It is not designated as such.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “It is not designated as such. Maybe it fall under the jurisdiction of the governing body or the taxing district, I don’t know because I have not read it. “

Mr. Jacob Jarrell stated, “I don’t know what CSLED has there or any of those other ones. I know when I read the thing Acadian wanted that whole I-49 to be commercial. They have people there that have been there a long time.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “The reason they have issues is just what we just said the commercial verses the residential. You don’t want them side by side.”

Mr. Jacob Jarrell stated, “Right, I understand that. When people come in for businesses they are going to look where it is convenient for people to get to, right.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “Right.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Madam Chair, I have an answer for Mr. Marks. We are in the process and we spoke about that the other day in reference to that. Remember when I told you all what the plan was: CSLED or SLED had did this study and had this group and submitted it to me and it was so far out of whack that we were not even going to look at it so I gave it right back. They did submit another plan that we are reviewing now that fits and I will be bringing it to the council in the near future. That is for I-49 up to LeBeau.”

Mr. James D. Fontenot addressed the council. He stated, “Good evening Council. I am James D. Fontenot. I live at 421 S. Fifth Street. I put myself before the council and I have asked to be considered for the St. Landry Parish Solid Waste Commission appointment that you have coming up. I am interested and trying to find a way to serve and trying to find a way to help. I have done everything from council, city council, council on aging and I will keep knocking on doors until God opens that door for me but this is the one that is before me now. If you have any questions for me I would be more than happy to answer anything. I am a Retired Navy Veteran, I work with the Veterans of Foreign wars, American Aging in Eunice. I just got back from the convention with all state and all American and we are doing all of the right things and following the paperwork and staying within the boundaries and trying to help. That is what things are all about doing the right thing because it is the right thing to do even when nobody is looking, that is how you stay out of trouble. I want to see what I can do to help. You all have a system in place that works and I would be more than happy to be a team player.”

Ms. Sharon Everett addressed the council. She stated, “My name is Sharon Everett. My address is 261 Britten Street, Opelousas, LA. I am here because I was here for re-appointment for the board for St. Landry Parish Housing Authority, Washington, LA.

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Madam Chair, in reference to that I think the attorney gave you all the letter and that appointment will be done by the Parish President’s Office. We will be in contact with you. Thank you.”

5. Public Works Report:

Mr. Barry Soileau, Public Works Director addressed the council. He stated, “For the month of June we Boom-Ax 17 roads, Culvert Cleaned 20 Roads, Culvert Insulation on 11 driveways, Debris Removal on 56 roads, Ditching of 6 roads, Grading of 116 roads, Material Spread on 4 roads, Passing on 27 roads, Shredding of 12 roads, Signs on 18 roads and 4 Roads of Washouts.”

Councilman Ken Marks questioned, “Those roads that you are mentioning are they given a district or an area of where they are located?”

Mr. Barry Soileau, Public Works Director stated, “No.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “They are just Blanket.”

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

Councilman Ken marks stated, “I am just wondering where are the monies being allocated and in which area.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “It is a simple fix. The ones who calls in the complaint that is how the work gets done. It is all prioritized based off the work that needs to be done. It is not done by a district, we look at this a one parish like it is supposed to be done and we don’t do districts.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “Excuse my ignorance I basically am not aware of it because we have our own road districts and things work out well for us.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “District 5 and District 6 is their own district and they work with us and we work with them but we don’t separate by districts.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “Okay.”

Chairwoman Vivian Olivier questioned, “Is there anyone else that would like to address the council?”

A motion was made by Councilman Jimmie Edwards, seconded by Councilman Ken Marks to accept the Public Works Report.

On roll call vote: YEAS: Nancy Carriere, Mildred Thierry, Ken Marks and Jimmie Edwards
NAYS: None. **ABSENT:** Jody White, Alvin Stelly and Timmy Lejeune. **ABSTAINED:** None.
Motion carried.

6. Forward all applications received for one appointment to Bayou Plaquemine Gravity Drainage District No. 12 for the remaining of four-year term. (07-15-2023 – 07-15-2027).

A motion was made by Councilwoman Mildred Thierry, seconded by Councilman Jimmie Edwards to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, July 17th, 2024** all applications received for one appointment to Bayou Plaquemine Gravity Drainage District No. 12 for the remaining of four-year term. (07-15-2023 – 07-15-2027)

On roll call vote: YEAS: Nancy Carriere, Mildred Thierry, Ken Marks and Jimmie Edwards
NAYS: None. **ABSENT:** Jody White, Alvin Stelly and Timmy Lejeune. **ABSTAINED:** None.
Motion forwarded.

7. Forward all applications received for two appointment to St. Landry Parish Solid Waste Disposal District for a four-year term. (08-31-2024 – 08-31-2028).

A motion was made by Councilman Ken Marks, seconded by Councilwoman Mildred Thierry to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, July 17th, 2024** all applications received for two appointment to St. Landry Parish Solid Waste Disposal District for a four-year term. (08-31-2024 – 08-31-2028)

On roll call vote: YEAS: Nancy Carriere, Mildred Thierry, Ken Marks and Jimmie Edwards
NAYS: None. **ABSENT:** Jody White, Alvin Stelly and Timmy Lejeune. **ABSTAINED:** None.
Motion forwarded.

8. Forward all applications received for one appointment to St. Landry Parish Housing Authority for a five-year term. (08-04-2024 – 08-04-2029).

No action taken.

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “Madam Chair, Mr. Bellard made it clear that we don’t appoint those people.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “That was the state law that we just found out about on Monday.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “You just found out about it on Monday?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Yes, it was brought to my attention so I talked to Mr. Duplechain and he did the research and came up with the same conclusion.”

9. Authorize the Council Clerk to advertise for two appointments to Fire District No. 7 for a one and two-year term. (09-19-2024 – 09-19-2025) & (09-19-2024 – 09-19-2026).

A motion was made by Councilwoman Mildred Thierry, seconded by Councilman Jimmie Edwards to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, July 17th, 2024** to authorize the Council Clerk to advertise for two appointments to Fire District No. 7 for a one and two-year term. (09-19-2024 – 09-19-2025) & (09-19-2024 – 09-19-2026).

On roll call vote: YEAS: Nancy Carriere, Mildred Thierry, Ken Marks and Jimmie Edwards
NAYS: None. **ABSENT:** Jody White, Alvin Stelly and Timmy Lejeune. **ABSTAINED:** None.
Motion forwarded.

10. Authorize the Council Clerk to advertise for one appointment to Ward Two Gravity Drainage No. 1 for a four-year term. (09-21-2024 – 09-21-2028).

A motion was made by Councilwoman Mildred Thierry, seconded by Councilman Ken Marks to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, July 17th, 2024** to authorize the Council Clerk to advertise for one appointment to Ward Two Gravity Drainage No. 1 for a four-year term. (09-21-2024 – 09-21-2028).

On roll call vote: YEAS: Nancy Carriere, Mildred Thierry, Ken Marks and Jimmie Edwards
NAYS: None. **ABSENT:** Jody White, Alvin Stelly and Timmy Lejeune. **ABSTAINED:** None.
Motion forwarded.

11. Discuss what’s being done to address drainage issues throughout the parish? (Councilwoman Mildred Thierry).

Councilwoman Mildred Thierry stated, “Mr. Bellard, if you don’t mind would you take this. We as councilmembers may know what is being done but I would like for the public to have the opportunity. Those who don’t know need to know what is being done. Although there are some issues that have not been solved the will know that it is being addressed.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Every day we are digging ditches somewhere in the parish. Again it is not so much as a per district type of deal as it comes in as a priority and one of the things is that we have crews that are digging every single day somewhere in the parish that complaints have come in on. Again culverts that need to be changed out we are doing that on a regular basis and cleaning out the culverts that is another big thing for us that is being done. The canals when funds are available we do canals. We have knocked out two of them and two of our issues on here right now for the next one. Bayou Karron and Bayou Mallet, the core have told us that next week we should have their permit to start doing that work on those two bayous. It has been probably one and one-half years and we are waiting on that. The funding came in two years ago but the core is taking a long time so once those bayous are done then that is definitely going to help those areas. We also have another plan that is coming into play and that will be in District 9, hopefully next year or sometime where \$5,500,000.00 is going to be put into that district. The reason for it and before anybody ask any questions is that is where it fits. The Federal Government gives us the criteria to follow and we have to follow what they tell us and that is a plan that could be in place as early as next year and hopefully that is going to alleviate a lot of flooding problems in that area as well, we don’t have a definite answer on that one. The Bayou Darbonne issue I believe will be heading to court pretty soon and that is another drainage issue that have been there for a while. I think legal action is going to be taken on that to allow us to do what we do once and for all and be finished with it and let the water drain like it needs to

drain. It is working out pretty good right now as far as drainage is concerned. It does not seem like it but if people look back four years ago compared to now they will see a difference. If they have videos or anything they will see a big difference in the drainage.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin questioned, “Mr. Bellard, are you talking about District 9 are you going to involve the Drainage District with all of their funds?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “We are not using their funds.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “Okay.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “The Drainage Board will be contacted whenever the time is ready for that to take place.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin questioned, “What project are you talking about?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I will do the explaining to you once we get the approval.”

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

12. Update on the status of cleaning Bayou Carron and Bayou Mallet.
(Councilwoman Mildred Thierry).

Parish President Jessie Bellard gave a response to that question earlier in the meeting.”

13. Update on Broadband. (Councilwoman Mildred Thierry)

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “So Broadband is actually happening all over. Right now LUS is in the Eunice Area traveling to Evangeline Parish. All of the different Cable providers are installing fiber where ever they can. You will see them all over the sides of the road even if they are not on the program to get some of this NTIA Money or GUMBO they are doing it on their own to get business. The purpose of the Broadband incentive is to make sure that everybody had an opportunity to have fast reliable internet service. This have brought out some of these companies to invest their own money. We have seen it and if you all have some issues in your district that is not getting the service that is needed we need to know about it so we can bring it up and let them know. For the most part everybody should be getting covered soon.”

Councilwoman Mildred Thierry stated, “I have some little side roads off of some of the major roads out in the rural area where they spoke with the guys out there doing the work and they were told they would not be getting it because of where they were located and the number of housing on that particular road. I thought that was so unfair because when they first came they said that every home would be receiving it and now with technology in the schools it is a necessity that every home have reliable service. I was just wondering if there is something that we can do to try to help them.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “The company that is telling them that is probable not the company that was awarded the contract. I will give you a provider, any one of the providers could be doing it on its own, on its own money. They are not going to go down that road because it is not beneficial to them to get down that road but the reason for that program is to give the incentive to these companies that were awarded. Just because that one is not going to do it does not mean that the next one coming behind him which will be the one on the program that is going to go down. They have to go to those houses, it is part of the program, everybody will have the opportunity to get fast reliable and affordable internet. If the residents are being told that that company is not going to do it but that company probable did not get the award. If they did get the award they would need to know what company it is and we can make that happen.”

Councilwoman Mildred Thierry stated, “Thank you.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “Mr. Bellard, the GUMBO, 1.0 I guess, the first one is the one you are referencing, did Congress approve 2.0 version for additional funding, is that correct?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “From my understanding, everything has been approved and sent to the state.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “We have not received any word yet?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Not yet but the state is implementing their plan. In our parish we were fortunate because the first grant that came through was the NTIA Grant that we got about 2.5 years ago. That is a different grant then we got the GUMBO, one and two so the purpose of that was to make sure that everybody had the opportunity. In the Rural areas it might not be fiber to the home but you are going to have the ability to get fast reliable internet. It has to meet a certain speed and the speed actually was increased no to the bear minimum. Once it is all put into place people should have a real good internet at their home and hopefully it works as it should.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “I would hope, I have ATT and I don’t know how many you guys have. I am at 9.0 at best Mega Bits and that is right there where it buffers the lot. I am hoping that will be improved.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Competition is a great thing when it comes to that.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “Thank you.”

Chairwoman Vivian Olivier questioned, “Does Chris Road have Internet Service? Chris Road off of HWY 93.

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “That is Allen Cable.”

Chairwoman Vivian Olivier stated, “I got a call from a man and he said that they don’t have it.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “They were awarded the NTIA Grant and I thinks some of the GUMBO Funds for that area. Whatever is not in one can be in the other but we will contact them.”

Chairwoman Vivian Olivier stated, “Okay.”

14. Discuss after school tutoring for grades 1-4 that Community Action used to provide. (Councilwoman Mildred Thierry).

Councilwoman Mildred Thierry stated, “Mr. Bellard can you elaborate on this a little. I have gotten a few calls in regards to this and they are asking me if I thought it would ever be possible that this service would be provided again. I told them I was not able to answer that. I was just thinking in mind that if it isn’t available anymore maybe you could sponsor one or two tutors with the tutors that the School Board is providing because they have a limited number of students that they can take, sometimes that in between child. I think that foundation seems to focus on upward but that foundation needs to be strong. If that foundation is strong they are not going to struggle as much as if they did not have a strong foundation. That is why I told them I would bring it up because I was not sure.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard started, “Yes, I will get with Cherise in the morning. We talked about that before and I forgot what she told me. I know she was going to look into it and I did not hear back from her. We use to help them with that program years ago. There was a little grant that came through where a lottery would take place but it is not here anymore but I am not saying that we can’t go back and get it.”

Councilwoman Mildred Thierry stated, “I think after that what they did they started giving those funds to the Trade Schools and helping those kids with computers and things instead of continuing the tutoring program which is where that lower level is where you need to try and reach them.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "I will double check with her in the morning."

Councilwoman Mildred Thierry stated, "Alright, thank you."

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

Councilman Ernest Blanchard stated, "I would like to go back to item No. 7. Applications for St. Landry Parish Solid Waste. We have an application for Ms. Jody Powell that have been on the board for quite a few years. She is using an address in Eunice at 1321 Oak Street. She does not live there. She lives in Lafayette. That is her previous husband that lives there and he pays the taxes and everything, I got a copy right here. Unless she lives in St. Landry Parish she should not be serving on the board."

Mr. Richard LeBouef, Director Solid Waste stated, "I would like to inform the council, both committees. Ms. Powell could not be here this evening because she had open heart surgery, she had a quadruple bypass. She will be available for comment as soon as we get the next one. I have spoken to a couple of attorneys and heard about Mr. Blanchard's comment and that is why I am here this evening. She served quite some time and she will be here for the next meeting hopefully to answer any questions that are put before her. Again she had an emergency quadruple bypass and can not be here this evening."

Councilman Harold Taylor stated, "When we asked for applications we ask for the Assessor to give us an address with the Tax Homestead Exemption. Are you familiar with that?"

Councilman Ernest Blanchard stated, "Yes sir."

Councilman Harold Taylor stated, "And you have the Homestead Exemption?"

Councilman Ernest Blanchard stated, "I have the Homestead Exemption right here from her Ex-husband that lives and own the property at 1321 West Oak."

Mr. Richard LeBouef, Director Solid Waste stated, "They are not divorced."

Councilman Ernest Blanchard stated, "They are not divorced."

Mr. Richard LeBouef, Director Solid Waste stated, "No Sir."

Councilman Ernest Blanchard stated, "According to him they are."

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, "We are not voting on this tonight. I suggest letting Ms. Powell come address the council when she is able to come and approach the council."

Councilman Ken Marks stated, "On the application with the physical address that is submitted is that automatically accepted as their domicile?"

Council Clerk Sherell Jordan stated, "Her physical address matched the address on her license. It is all the same on her license. That is where she is registered to vote."

Councilman Ken Marks stated, "So she would qualify with what you are saying."

Council Clerk Sherell Jordan stated, "Where she is registered to vote at. She never changed it. That is all that we require."

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, "Can they do a search to see if she owns any other property in St. Landry Parish except for 1321 Oak Street in Eunice? We have some other people that are serving on some boards in St. Landry Parish that do not live in St. Landry Parish but they own properties in St. Landry Parish."

Mr. Richard LeBouef, Director Solid Waste stated, "Multiple pieces of property Mr. Ardoin, multiple pieces."

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “That is why I am asking out of all fairness to these allegations. It was brought four years ago, the same thing, Jerry Red was the Chairman of the Parish Council at that time and that question was asked.”

16. Adjourn.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Mildred Thierry, seconded by Councilwoman Nancy Carriere to adjourn the Public Works Committee.

On roll call vote: YEAS: Jody White, Mildred Thierry, Alvin Stelly, Timmy Lejeune, and Jimmie Edwards. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. **ABSTAINED:** None.

Motion carried.

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