

**ST. LANDRY PARISH COUNCIL
ADMINISTRATIVE/FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4th, 2024
OLD CITY MARKET, 131 W. BELLEVUE ST.
OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA**

ADMINISTRATIVE/FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

1. Chairman Harold Taylor called this meeting of the Administrative/Finance Committee of the St. Landry Parish Council to order.
2. Pledge of Allegiance & Invocation was said earlier in the Special Meeting.
3. **Roll Call:** Nancy Carriere, Faltery Jolivette, Ken Marks and Ernest Blanchard. Ex-Officio Wayne Ardoin. **ABSENT:** Dexter Brown.
4. **Person to address the Committee.**
 - a. Mr. Willie Hayes III – St. Landry Parish Housing Authority

Mr. Willie Hayes III addressed the council. He stated, “Thank you Mr. Chairman, good afternoon to each and every one of you. My name is Willie Hayes, I am from Melville, the northern end of the parish. I would like to thank the board for allowing me to come before you to speak on my behalf and hopefully by sharing some additional information with you I can overcome this dilemma that I am faced with, unfortunately. First of all I would like to start off and I know I don’t have that much time but I have some information that I would like to share with you. There are some folders that I gave to the chairman and I would like for you to pass one out to each councilmember.

Administrative Finance Chairman Harold Taylor stated, “Madam Clerk can you pass these out.”

Mr. Willie Hayes III stated, “I will wait until you all get your packets before I continue. I remember she said that I needed 13 so there is an extra one.”

Administrative Finance Chairman Harold Taylor stated, “Mr. Hayes, while she is passing those out do you want to say a little about yourself? Your background and so forth.”

Mr. Willie Hayes III stated, “Okay, it is all in the folder and it is in conjunction on how I am going to start off. This is some of the information that is associated with myself and background, there is more but this is as they would say the ‘meat’ of it. Okay as I said earlier I am coming here before the board to see if I can share some additional information that you may not have or you may not know. First you will look at the table of contents that I have given to you I would like to start off with the qualifications and that is on the next page. Thirty-one years as a Commissioner with the St. Landry Parish Housing Authority and many of you that are on this board supported me on many of my re-appointments. I want you to know that I was qualified then and I am even more qualified now. In my duration as a Commissioner there were many other activities that I was engaged in up to this point, former elected official, councilman for the town of Melville and a five year term on the Police Jury when they were doing the Police Jury System. I have sat in that same seat that you are sitting in now, just in a different building. I was three terms as Mayor of the town of Melville and at a very early age I served 8 years as a Representative for the elderly here in St. Landry Parish. I am a retired Administrator with the St. Landry Parish School Board, by the way 40 plus years there. I was a former Vice-President of the Commissioners for the Louisiana Housing Council. I presently serve as Senior Vice President to the Louisiana Housing Council which makes me eligible to become president of the L. H. C. for here in the State of Louisiana. If you go to the next page under certificates and certifications, the very first certificate is to make you aware that I am a NAHRO Certified Commissioner and I am certified for the next three years, this is my second term being certified as a Commissioner so I continue to gather information to improve not only myself but to help the Housing Authority and the residents, whether they are in public or section 8. In that packet I also have my training, I

am up to date on all of my training, ethics and sexual harassment, all of those trainings are up to date, 2024. I ask that you all go through that when you have time. The next item is a letter from the Louisiana Housing Council, Mr. Bobby Collins, a previous or an immediate past president of the Louisiana Housing Council. I asked him to write a letter in support of me, please read the letter, it sums up everything that I have tried to explain to you all in this short length of time. Mr. Bellard indicated in a text through some of you all or maybe all of you I don't know, but it did indicate that he was in regular conversation with HUD, LHC. I spoke with the past president, I would have gotten a letter from the president herself but due to death in her family, her husband passed away, during that grieving period I can understand, when I asked her she just did not have time and was not up to par because of losing a loved one. When you lose a loved one like that you don't have time to deal with nothing but recovery and that is what the mode she was in, the recovery mode. The immediate past president said, Willie, I will write a letter for you and he did. I am asking for you all to read that letter. The next item on the table of contents is the Procedure for the removal of a Commissioner. You don't just ask a Commissioner a couple of questions and if it is not the right answer or if it is not even close to the right answer then you are going to say I don't think that you are knowledgeable enough about HUD Affairs. HUD Affairs, LHC Affairs and Parish Council Affairs change every day and every hour, there is no way that you can keep up with all of them, no one knows it all. I am asking that you all read this statute of the procedures in removing a Commissioner. Please pay very close attention to the highlighted area that is indicated to you on that sheet. My last and final page includes the letter removing me from the board. Please read the letter, go back to the procedures for removing a Commissioner and pay very close attention to the highlighted area. Ladies and gentleman of the council here in St. Landry Parish I come to you this afternoon asking that you re-appoint me to the St. Landry Parish Housing Authority and allow me to prove to our Parish President that I am knowledgeable, I am worthy, I am dedicated and I am a Public Servant, I have been that and I will continue to do that. After my term is up, if he is not satisfied or if you all are not satisfied he will then have the option of removing me, it is simple as that. At least give me a chance to prove myself, I ask you all to do that, Thank you very much for your time."

Administrative Finance Chairman Harold Taylor stated, "Thank you Mr. Hayes. Our next speaker is Mr. Greg Johnson."

Mr. Greg Johnson addressed the council. He stated, "Good evening, my name is Greg Johnson. I am the VP of Commissioners for LHC. Currently and I am here in support of Mr. Willie Hayes. It saddens me that we have to come and discuss his qualifications but I would like to ask this council to consider re-appointing him and reconsider his appointment to the St. Landry Parish Housing Authority and here is why. Mr. Hayes have brought a tremendous amount of change to LHC and a tremendous amount of change to St. Landry Parish. He is very open and honest and I can tell you that because I served underneath him for a brief period of time. Every single conference that we go to, I don't care if it is in Chicago or Washington D.C. there is one person that the majority of the people knows and that is Mr. Willie Hayes and he represents St. Landry Parish in every state in the United States very well. I can tell you that he has a reputation throughout the housing industry, a very reputable person. There is probably not any other Commissioner in this state that gets to do what he does at all of these conferences and represent St. Landry Parish well and I am asking this board to reconsider him based on the facts, based on his history and based on his performance. I can tell you I would be proud to have Mr. Willie Hayes representing me at these conferences. He brings dignity, loyalty and he bring honesty to the Housing Industry. I can tell you personally that I go to him for advice and it is always advice that is above the board. He always give advice that requires you to be a stand up person and I am asking this board to reconsider. If you guys loose him on the board you all are losing a jewel and you all are losing a standing that this guy worked 30 plus years to get in the LHC, again he is the VP of LHC, Southwest and all over these people know Mr. Willie Hayes all over the place and they respect him. If you guys do not re-appoint him I think that you guys will be losing a jewel in this parish. Thank you."

Administrative Finance Chairman Harold Taylor stated, "Mr. Bellard, I think that you sent out an e-mail that you did not want us to appoint him. Do you want to elaborate on that?"

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “No Sir. This is a Committee Meeting not a Full Council Meeting. No Sir. I have no comment.”

Administrative Finance Chairman Harold Taylor stated, “The question is this: Do we want to send it to full council for further discussion?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “That is the decision that you all have to make. I am not going to discuss anything at this meeting.”

Administrative Finance Chairman Harold Taylor stated, “Members of this committee do we have a motion to move this to full council?”

A motion was made by Councilman Ernest Blanchard, seconded by Councilwoman Nancy Carriere to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, September 18th, 2024** to further discuss re-appointing Mr. Willie Hayes III back to the Housing Authority Board.

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

Motion forwarded.

5. Parish President & Finance Reports:

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “So you have the Financials in front of you. Today we got notice of another Grant that we received, \$1,500,000.00 from the Federal Government, only 3 in the state were award this. This is another program that we are putting in place to help people get to work and provide transportation for the people of our parish to get them to work and to help them get the education that is needed to learn their trade. It is mainly dealing in the medical field but the application was very difficult to go through but we were awarded it today, we got the message today so that is a good thing. It is for the entire parish so we will be able to utilize Community Action Buses for the transportation and utilize the schools throughout the Region for that.”

Councilwoman Mildred Thierry questioned, “Mr. President in the past if you recall I had inquired about providing some extra tutoring in support of the lower grades like from at least K thru 3. I know that St. Landry Parish School Board normally provide but it does not get to cover all children who needs it. I believe that if you have a strong foundation you will do better as you get up in the grades. So would we be able to consider maybe possibly placing another tutor or two at those sites where they have the tutoring going on from some of these funds.

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I can ask that question. These funds are allocated specifically for certain things. I don’t believe it is going to fit the mold for younger kids. It is mainly for those that are ready to get to work and help them get through school and get to the work environment and to their trade. I can ask that question but we have not given up on that. It is hard to get funding for those types of programs but we have not given up.

Councilwoman Mildred Thierry stated, “Okay, please don’t. Thank you.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “I heard you mention that it is for medical training or to help with the workforce and the medical. Years ago I remember when I was younger, not to long ago rather, they had the Candy Stripers at the Hospitals. Could you consider using some of the funds for that? Educating and getting some of the high school kids to do some Candy Stripping which would help at the hospital.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “That is a good question. I can ask that question tomorrow, we will see. The Grant is specific but it is dealing in the Medical Field. It might have an option there so we will ask that question.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “Also Nursing Homes and Hospital, even Hansberry Elderly, maybe getting some of the high school kids to do grooming at the nursing homes so we can get our young children involved in that and helping them for future Cosmetology and helping at the Senior Citizens Facilities.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “We will make that request tomorrow and see what they tell us.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin questioned, “Mr. Bellard, have you started the process on selling the bonds?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Tomorrow morning I will be meeting with Mr. LeFleur and tying him down to something that we all can agree on.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “I don’t know if this is the appropriate time or not to discuss the Clerk of Court. Would you rather discuss that later? What is the bottom line with the Clerk of Court? I did not hear anything with that.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I had a meeting with the Clerk of Court and his Attorney. We had our Attorney and Chad was in the room and I can tell you that he is wanting us to pay half of the remodeling and stuff. I just threw this out there I am not paying half of the remodeling, that is not our building. I do agree that we pay fair market value on space that we take up at that place. Whether they like it or not it is irrelevant because it is not our building but we are obligated to do some storage for some of the files and I don’t have a problem paying fair market value rent for the space and that is the last conversation I had with them.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “I am full of questions tonight, on the news today, it is the first time that I heard of this litigation, it is not finances is that correct? It is only improvements with the courthouse.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “We did not get served yet. This lady goes around all over and sues people for ADA Requirements.”

Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated, “Say it again please sir.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “This lady who is suing us or allegedly suing us, she went to TV 10 with it. She has been suing a bunch of people, some stores and other businesses. Our attorney advised me to contact a Lawyer out of Lafayette and I spoke with her yesterday and she sent over some stuff today. Upon talking to her and talking to the architects and talking to the Fire Marshall we are okay. The Courthouse was built in 1937 or 1939, I forgot the exact date but a lot of these things that she is asking for makes us in compliance, now, can we do better? Yes, if we can do better we are going to do better. One of the things was a basic counter top in the Clerk of Court’s Office, we did not build them the Clerk of Court did. I did send out a letter that no renovations in the courthouse is going to be done unless I approve it so that way we can make sure if someone wants to do renovations it does meet the codes. If we are not aware of it we can’t fix it, we can’t stop it. We put the handicap ramp in the front last year or maybe year before last, nobody made us do it, there was a need for it and the funding was available so we did it, so we do what we can. Even the new Jury Boxes for the Courtrooms. They said in the lawsuit that I read on line that we don’t have a spot for a handicap person. From what I am understanding through the attorneys and the Fire Marshall’s Office and the Architects we have to make accommodations and we do that and we put them right in front. The new courtroom that is being built now we are going to make accommodations to put at least one inside the box. If you have room to do it you can do it, if you don’t have room it is not required you have to make accommodations. Everything on that list we went and check it and we will be okay, again we have to answer the call but we have not been served yet.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “I am glad that you answered the questions because I had no idea that we had a lawsuit. You just mentioned a new courthouse that is being built.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “The courtroom, Judge Meche’s Courtroom.”

Councilman Ernest Blanchard stated, “I think that we need to set a date or something with Steve Moosa for the Audit. We happen to have an Audit this year.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “We are meeting with them on Friday and they are going to meet with you all next week.”

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.

6. Forward to full meeting for the Council to serve as the Board of Review for anyone present + wishing to file a protest in reference to their property values.

A motion was made by Councilman Ernest Blanchard, seconded by Councilman Ken Marks to forward to Regular Meeting held on *Wednesday September 18th, 2024* for the Council to serve as the Board of Review for anyone present + wishing to file a protest in reference to their property values.

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 any other business properly brought before this committee.

None.

8. Adjourn.

A motion was made by Councilman Faltery Jolivette, seconded by Councilman Ken Marks 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**