

**ST. LANDRY PARISH COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY APRIL 8th, 2026 @ 6:00 P.M.
OLD CITY MARKET, 131 W BELLEVUE ST
OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA**

MINUTES

- I.** This meeting was called to order by Chairman Wayne Ardoin.
- II.** The Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation was said by Councilwoman Mildred Thierry.
- III. Roll Call: PRESENT:** Jody White, Nancy Carriere, Faltery Jolivette, Mildred Thierry, Alvin Stelly, Vivian Olivier, Timmy Lejeune, Jimmie Edwards and Ernest Blanchard. Ex Officio: Wayne Ardoin. **ABSENT:** Harold Taylor, Ken Marks and Dexter Brown. *Councilman Dexter Brown was absent for roll call but later joined the meeting.*

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “I have no one that is in the audience and I have no one that have asked to speak.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Mr. Chairman, did you all pass over the Public Comment Section. I have informational things to let you all know about, no discussion about them, I just want to let you all know about a couple of things that have taken place and what we are going to be doing but not for any action by the council. I see that we don’t have anything else on the agenda for further discussion so I was going to bring it up in the Public Comments if that is proper.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “Go ahead Sir.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “FEMA, last week we attended a conference and they updated us on FEMA. FEMA has started changing the process and it doesn’t look like it is going to be good for the parish or any parish or county. The most they are going to pay now is 75% of a disaster and it could be as little as 50% of a disaster. They are making a lot different requirements for us to even qualify. I just want to give you all the information and I am going to send you all the packet that we received. I can put a little spread sheet attached to it to give you all some highlights in it but basically they changed the rules. The only good thing that may come out of it is that they are going to treat the funding like they did with the ARA Funding. This is Eric, (*calling the cell phone*) hey Eric, give me just a minute. They are going to treat it like ARA Funding and they are going to provide the funding upfront like a certain percentage of it so we are operating on their money instead of the parishes money. There are a couple of good things but for the most part they are going to be paying less but I will get you all that information. I was not here for last week’s meeting but I saw the pictures of all of the trash. I am putting a plan in place to address that issue. It is going to involve the parish government. We have two dumpsters already and we are moving them throughout the parish to collect the trash. Our problem that we have in our parish is that Solid Waste is one hour from Eunice, one hour from Arnaudville and one hour from Cankton and it is too far. We are getting with DEQ to get their permission and we are going to set up some sites in our parish. Once a week we are going to have one of our employees stationed there. If anybody wants to bring in their trash, the bulky trash, they can bring it at that location instead of having to drive one hour to get to Solid Waste. That is going to be something that we are just starting on today and hopefully get that going and have the same day every month for that area.”

Councilman Ernest Blanchard questioned, “Is Solid Waste going to pay for that employee?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “I did not talk to Solid Waste at all. I am going to explain to them what we are doing but in the past they did not agree to do any kind of substations. It is time that we do something because they have too much trash and we are picking up the trash. What I am going to put in place is what parish government is going to

do about the liter problem. If they want to jump on board and help they are more than welcome.”

Councilman Ernest Blanchard questioned, “Will you talk to them about it?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “If they want. I will let them know what we are doing once the plan is complete, yes.”

Councilman Dexter Brown stated, “Mr. Bellard, the same thing that you are saying regarding these specific sites to dispose the waste, I saw it on two occasions. When I was coming back from Oklahoma they had these different areas where people would back up on that ramp and dump in those dumpsters and that was it. They would hook up to those long dumpsters and roll out. I encountered that in Evangeline Parish, I was looking for some firewood.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “They do have something like that over there.”

Councilman Deter Brown continued, “Yes, I was looking for some firewood and they have a small sight and they just roll up.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “We are not going to leave the container there. It is only for that day and it is going to be removed because we don’t want to have a trash pile in the area. On the day of collection we are going to be out there making sure that nobody throws any stuff that don’t belong in there and we are going to be doing what DEQ is requiring us to do for that one day a week and that is what we want to be.”

Councilman Dexter Brown stated, “As a matter of fact in Evangeline Parish they have about 2 or 3 acers that is fenced in and they have a gate in the front where they can’t dump anything but that is what I was going to bring to the table to you.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Right now we are going to try and do this once a week in different areas of the parish. We figure four different areas of the parish we would cover so every month on a certain date we will be in that section and people can know about it instead of having to drive one hour to go to Beggs. They can come there and we can take the trash for them. We do have two dumpster that we have at the Ag Arena. It belongs to the Parish Government so we will be using those.”

Councilman Dexter Brown stated, “Thank you sir. Appreciate you.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “Mr. Bellard I am the one that had put it on the agenda. It was really not about what was talked about, about the household goods and all that stuff because I think that Morgan and Morgan are doing a good job, whoever is paying for it.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Oh yes I agree.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin continued, “My concern was this: And I gave all due credit to Mr. John Guidroz from Solid Waste, I asked him to go on Country Ridge and clean up that corner where that service road connects with County Ridge. It was a shame to see the liter of bags, Styrofoam cups and the whole nine yards. When Barry went and cut the grass down Country Ridge Road, in that curb, that is when you really found out all you had in the weeds there because everything just comes out from under that machine.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Now they do have cameras.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin continued, “It is like that in other areas. If you go ride under that over pass by Belmont Academy where the sheriff have his motor pool it is ashamed to see what goes on. It is liter that people are just throwing out of their vehicles. As far as for picking up on the side of the road and in the subdivision, Park Vista, people throw stuff over the weekend and you call it in and Morgan and Morgan will have it pick up on Thursday.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “This is basically what is happening and I see a lot of it by Eunice. They will go out into the country side and dumped large item. Of course we call to get it picked up or we will go pick it up with our Grappler Truck. To make it easier

for people this is giving them a location that they can come dump and we will transport it to the dump. It will make it easier for people and we will see if that will help. As far as the roadside trash, I swore on an affidavit the other day for an arrest on somebody because I saw it. I wrote a statement and swore on the affidavit and said this is what happened and they arrested the guy. Chad does take it very serious, he does not let that go. I see it every day in court and I know that Garrett can attest to that because he is the one that is doing it, they don't give them a break when they are catching them doing any type of liter. The enforcement side of it is being handled but it is so much of it, it's is a shame."

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere questioned, "We had spoken and I had asked you about I-49 Exit about putting a permanent trash Bin."

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "We talked to the state. We actually talked to Brandon about that, it is a process with them. He is going to look into it and see how it has to be done because that is another site right there that is constantly getting trashed."

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, "Okay."

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "I have Mr. Eric LaFleur on the line. He is not able to attend but he is on the phone if you all have any questions or concerns, can you hear Eric?"

Attorney Eric LaFleur stated, "Yes, I am here Jessie."

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, "Any councilmembers have any questions for Mr. LaFleur? He is the one that drafted up this Wal-Mart Distribution thing. He was asked to come a couple of times and he was not able to make it. Do any councilmembers have any questions?"

Attorney Eric LaFleur stated, "I have a star baseball player."

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "I can give you all a rundown of it and we can go from there is you all want. Basically what Walmart Distribution is doing and what they consider is their code name **Project Rosie**. It is a \$276,000,000.00 project and a deal was worked out with them in order to keep Wal-Mart Distribution where they are. With them staying there of course it is going to keep the jobs and it is going to keep a lot of things happening in our area. They are going to invest approximately \$276,000,000.00 over the next few years. In that investment, what we did with the project, we did a Pilot Agreement, which is what you have in front of you. They got a 50% abatement, basically on their taxes, on their Ad Valorem Taxes and 43% of the other 50% comes to the taxing entities and 7% goes to SLED. The only thing that you are not going to see in this draft tonight is going to be done in the next couple of days is: Instead of a percentage of the Pilot Payments it is going to be a fixed amount of Pilot Payments, so it is going to be a dollar amount every year that they are going to pay. After 10 or 12 years or whatever it is they want to come back and look at it and make sure that they did invest the \$276,000,000.00 and if they did less than that then they would want to adjust the payments accordingly but for right now their potential investment is \$276,000,000.00 of which the taxes on that would be about 50%."

Councilman Alvin Stelly questioned, "How much will the parish get out of the 43%?"

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "That area over there has the Fire Districts and other things. So the Fire Districts is going to get their cut, everybody gets their cut, for us, if I am not mistaken it is around 10% of the total amount based off of the Millage that we have."

Councilman Alvin Stelly questioned, "And the School Board."

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "The School Board gets like 60% of it."

Councilman Alvin Stelly questioned, "How much."

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, "Like 60%."

Councilman Alvin Stelly stated, “And they want to pass another 9.9 Mil Tax.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “What I am saying is it is 60% of the 43%. That is how it is.”

Councilman Alvin Stelly questioned, “When will this tax start? When will we start collecting some of this tax?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard questioned Attorney Eric LaFleur on the phone, “Hey Eric they gave a different time line. I want to say they want to start in 2027.”

Attorney Eric LaFleur on the cell phone stated, “Yes, the way it stands now until we finalize the agreement they pay 100% of all Ad Valorem Taxes. So the way that it is scheduled the day they begin construction is the day that it kicks in. Now although it kicks in the amount that you get paid is based on the amount of items that they incorporate in the final project. I think the project construction part of it is a very short period in the short window. We will expect to begin it probably within 9 - 12 months.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Of 2027.”

Attorney Eric LaFleur stated, “Out of the 43% the parish can expect to get about \$411,000.00 in 2027, around \$398,000.00 in 2028 and it goes up a little bit because they are adding more and more to the value of the Capital Improvements but the estimates would be about \$400,000.00.”

Councilman Alvin Stelly stated, “Per year.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Yes Sir. Per year.”

Councilman Alvin Stelly questioned, “And we will start getting that next year, 2027.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “If they start in 2027 it is going to be done in 2028. It will be taxable in 2027 but collected in 2028.”

Attorney Eric LaFleur stated, “In the Interim we are going to collect the Regular Standard Ad Valorem Tax from the whole facility.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Yes so one of the deals we made with Wal-Mart was that they would under the 1999 Agreement, where they were not paying any taxes at all, now they are paying 100% of Ad Valorem Taxes on everything at the site. If I am not mistaken that is around \$650,000.00 a year that is coming into Ad Valorem Taxes, not just for us but in total. So that is additional revenue that is coming into the parish from Wal-Mart. I want to tell you all that Wal-Mart was more than happy to make that deal because they feel that their time of their Pilot Agreement from 1999 they were very appreciative but they wanted to make sure that Wal-Mart was a tax payer of our parish, this was really a good conversation. Right now they are on the books since last year for 100% of the Ad Valorem.”

Attorney Eric LaFleur stated, “You are going to collect about \$600,000.00 that you were not getting before. Not just the parish but every Ad Valorem Taxing Authority.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere questioned, “Is this the only improvements that they are going to be making for the future? Will it go up if they make any more improvements?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “No, so right now this is what they are anticipating on doing or pretty much going automated at these sites. So there is \$276,000,000.00 over the next few years that they are going to be investing right here in our parish.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere questioned, “When you say automated you mean AI?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Automated mean yes AI and also for like robots and stuff.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere questioned, “Is this going to cost any jobs?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “No, this is one of the things that Eric and I and Bill Rodier and Sherry did talk to Wal-Mart about, it is the jobs, we did not want to lose any jobs. The only jobs that are not going to be kept are the ones that they can’t fill. They have openings right now that they can’t fill so what this is going to do for Wal-Mart is allow them to do a lot better and do it a lot faster and have more goods, keeping in mind more products on the ground means more taxes for the parish. The more they can produce and move the more taxes they have to pay. So it is a win-win for the parish to keep Wal-Mart here.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “So SLED and Mr. Rodier and everybody is on board with this agreement? Okay.”

Councilman Ernest Blanchard stated, “Mr. Jessie I know that you were planning on getting some of that money this year.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Not that money. Not Wal-Mart.”

Councilman Ernest Blanchard stated, “Not the Wal-Mart Money.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “The 600,000.00 that they are paying in taxes, that is the new money from Wal-Mart not the Pilot Agreement.”

Councilman Ernest Blanchard stated, “Not the Pilot Agreement, that’s the money that is going to help us pay the Bond back?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “On the Ad Valorem Taxes?”

Councilman Ernest Blanchard stated, “Yes.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “So let me just tell you we got more money this year in Ad Valorem Taxes through Wal-Mart and we got more money through the Pilot Payment from Light Source. But let me tell you what we got the decrease in: Ever since the law changed on the Inventory Tax, you self-report Inventory. Before you could get a credit from the State Income Tax. The Government changed that and now when you self-report you don’t get that deduction so our Inventory Tax went down a lot.”

Councilman Timmy Lejeune questioned, “Mr. Bellard on that Inventory Tax, the council have the right to collect it if they want too, right? It is parish by parish now.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “So we have the option after this year, if I am not mistaken, they are trying to do something this year in the session I am not exactly sure about that but to give us the option to either ‘**Opt In**’ or ‘**Opt Out**’ on Inventory Tax. Right now we collect Inventory Taxes but the problem is if they don’t get the credit on it, self-reporting they are not going to report as much inventory so therefore we are losing a lot of tax money on the parish level. Inventory Tax in our Parish is about 33% of our Ad Valorem Taxes. We did collect more Ad Valorem Taxes through the Pilot and through Light Source VP and through Wal-Mart however the Inventory side of it went down. We pretty much came out even as of last year. We should have seen an increase but of course like always when we go up something else comes down. So Inventory Taxes is hurting us and we know that it is going to hurt us and we do stress our frustration at the Capital but the governor like the idea of having the Inventory Tax being an option for the parish to collect it or not collect it. We don’t have a choice without that Inventory Tax we have a problem.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere questioned, “Mr. Ernie was under the impression and maybe you can explain that some of this money that we were going to be getting from the Wal-Mart Agreement was going to help pay the bond, can you elaborate on how we are going to pursue the payments on the bond.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “The taxes on the Pilot Agreement is through NextEra that is the agreement that we have. I had a meeting with them yesterday and they are coming on board by August 2026 and they are not selling, okay so make sure that everybody understands. I heard a rumor last week or week before last that they were selling

to another company. Everything is for sale but as of now NextEra is telling me that they have two much money invested in this project to sell it. They want to see it go through and they have the buyers lined up for the electricity and it is going to happen. It is just a matter of getting things done. We met with them yesterday and they had a question about the Substation. They wanted to know if that was part of their project on the permit side. We got that answered, it is definitely part of it so they got their answer and they are moving forward. They are coming back to us for two more projects but it is going to be the battery charging system project in 2028. Just to let you all know they are coming back to reinvest, they are not leaving us.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere questioned, “So we will be good starting the bond payments in September?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “They start in August and they have to pay quarterly to the School Board so whatever else that will make it work, yes.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin questioned, “Mr. Bellard on this Wal-Mart deal, they are self-reporting sort of like the Inventory Tax?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Yes Sir.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin continued, “So no one audits them as far as the equipment that they brought in at the dollar amount. Everything is going to be on the up and up.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “What happens with the Pilot Agreement is that there is a Clause in there that allows us to go and Audit that. That could be pulled at any time but the self-reporting side of it on the Ad Valorem Taxes is with the Tax Assessor but on the Pilot Agreement there is a Clause in it that allows us to go and check what is going on but we are also going to have that done anyway to make sure that the 276 that they anticipate on spending that we get there. If we don’t get there then we will have to reduce it or they go higher we would have to increase it.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin, “That is what I am saying, is something going to be in place? Is it going to be policed?”

Attorney Eric LaFleur stated, “I was going to say, I don’t know if that was Wayne speaking but the Tax Assessor on her own has the authority to audit if she has any doubt or reason to believe that they are not reporting correctly just like they would with any other business.”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Okay.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “Okay, are there any other questions? At this time Mr. Bellard you need this council to pass the agreement for you to sign off as Parish Government?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “Yes, if you all remember correctly last year we were going to lobby the Legislature to change the rules for SLED to not allow them to go on and do what they want to do when it comes to these kind of deals without notifying the Governing Authority. So we pulled that bill and they have agreed to do what they are doing right now. It is to say here this is our plan, we want you all to see it and approve it. If you all don’t approve it what is the reason why and bring it back to the table. Even though they are not required by law to actual approval they are asking us to approve this deal as it is printed because that is what we were asking them for and they are agreeing to do this.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “Am I correct, Fire District 3 is going to have to sign off, Law Enforcement Tax people are going to have to sign off on this thing are we the only ones that is going to have to sign off?”

Parish President Jessie Bellard stated, “We are the only ones that is going to sign off on it only because we asked them to allow it to take place, they don’t have to get approval from nobody, they can do it on their own, Economic Development. Everybody is in the loop and everybody knows what is going on with this, it is just time to finish.”

A motion was made by Councilman Timmy Lejeune, seconded by Councilman Faltery Jolivette to authorize the Parish President to sign the Payment in Lieu of Tax Agreement and Agreement to Lease and Purchase by and between St. Landry Parish Economic and Industrial Development District and Wal-Mart Stores East, LP. Version 18.0

On roll call vote: YEAS: Jody White, Nancy Carriere, Faltery Jolivette, Mildred Thierry, Alvin Stelly, Vivian Olivier, Dexter Brown, Timmy Lejeune, Jimmie Edwards, and Ernest Blanchard. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** Harold Taylor and Ken Marks. **ABSTAINED:** None. WHEREUPON, this motion was adopted on this, the 8th, day of April, 2026.

V. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

Payment in Lieu of Tax Agreement an Agreement to Lease and Purchase by and between St. Landry Parish Economic and Industrial Development District and Wal-Mart Stores East, LP.

Item discussed earlier in the Public Comment Section.

VI. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Councilman Timmy Lejeune, seconded by Councilwoman Mildred Thierry to adjourn the Special Meeting.

On roll call vote: YEAS: Jody White, Nancy Carriere, Faltery Jolivette, Mildred Thierry, Alvin Stelly, Vivian Olivier, Dexter Brown, Timmy Lejeune, Jimmie Edwards, and Ernest Blanchard. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** Harold Taylor and Ken Marks. **ABSTAINED:** None. WHEREUPON, this motion was adopted on this, the 8th, day of April, 2026.

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