

BOSSIER PARISH POLICE JURY  
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS/BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES  
Mr. Glenn Benton, Chairman  
July 3, 2024

The Capital Improvements/Building and Grounds Committee of the Bossier Parish Police Jury met on this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of July, 2024, at 12:30 p.m., in the Police Jury Conference Room, Bossier Parish Courthouse, Benton, Louisiana. Mr. Glenn Benton, Chairman, called the meeting to order, with the following members present:

Mr. Glenn Benton, Chairman, Mr. Tom Salzer, Co-Chairman, Mr. Jimmy Cochran, Mr. Doug Rimmer, and Mr. Philip Rodgers.

Others present for the meeting:

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| Ms. Carlotta Askew-Brown | Ms. Rachael Graves  |
| Ms. Carolina Blunck      | Mr. Eric Hudson     |
| Ms. Shanna Boykin        | Mr. Patrick Jackson |
| Mr. Barry Butler         | Mr. John Ed Jordan  |
| Mr. Julian Darby         | Ms. Megan Ramos     |
| Ms. Ashley Ezell         | Mr. Matt Redmon     |
| Ms. Stacie Fernandez     | Mr. Jack Skaggs     |
| Mr. Jim Firth            | Mr. Keith Sutton    |
| Mr. Butch Ford           | Dr. Ken Ward        |
| Ms. Pam Glorioso         | Mr. Rod White       |

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Mr. Butch Ford, Parish Administrator, stated that Mr. Jack Skaggs, President and Chief Executive Officer of The Coordinating and Development Company (CDC), has inquired about the current administrative building at the Bossier Parish Library, which will soon be vacant as those offices will be moving to the new Central Library.

Mr. Skaggs stated that prior to the Covid pandemic, the CDC received an Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grant to begin consolidating development services in the area, including the Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments and the North Louisiana Economic Partnership. He further stated that as those plans developed, it was determined that a larger space is needed to accommodate everyone. Mr. Skaggs stated that due to the increased cost of construction during the pandemic, the size of the building shrunk due to budget cuts, which caused a change in the makeup of the consolidation of services. He further stated that the EDA has approved the change in scope, but required that the CDC proceed with the building on its own. Mr. Skaggs stated that new plans were drawn, but due to an additional increase in construction costs, the plans were reduced once again to accommodate budget limitations. He stated that what was once a 10,000 square foot building has now been bid as a 4,500 square foot building. Mr. Skaggs stated that when he became aware of the potential availability of the library's

administrative building, he expressed his interest in converting it to fit their needs, as well as providing additional office space for other uses.

Mr. Glenn Benton asked if Mr. Skaggs' request is to purchase the building for the appraised value. Mr. Skaggs stated that if the jury is inclined, he will set up a call with the EDA to advise of the change in plans and obtain approval to move this matter forward.

Mr. Ford advised that the current administrative building is approximately 7,000-8,000 square feet in size. He further stated that the building was purchased for approximately \$800,000, and approximately \$400,000 has been spent in renovations of the building. Mr. Ford stated that he has a meeting with Mr. Mark Prevot at the library next week for a walk-through of the space where the administrative offices will be located. He further stated that if the jury agrees, he will contact an appraiser to start the process. Mr. Patrick Jackson, Parish Attorney, stated that any funds received from the sale of the building will go back to the library.

Mr. Skaggs stated that he is not opposed to a delayed sale if the parish needs the building for a period of time, but he will speak with the EDA for approval of the purchase of the building in the interim. He further stated that in the event the parish does not wish to sell the building, he will need to know that information within the next two months so he can proceed with construction of the 4,000 square foot building that was recently bid.

Mr. Ford provided information concerning the status of the moving process for the library and its offices, and advised that some branches have utilized the existing furniture that is no longer needed. He further stated that he has discussed the surplus of the remaining furniture with Mr. Jim Firth, Purchasing Agent.

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Mr. Ford stated that he recently met with Sheriff Julian Whittington, Bossier Parish Sheriff's Office, and others regarding a suitable space for a new 911 center. He further stated that he has been advised by Mr. Jimmy Hebert that he does not recommend renovating one of the old library buildings for a 911 center. Mr. Ford stated that a tour of the newly constructed 911 center in Ascension Parish is scheduled. He stated that there are many code requirements necessary for this type of use, which will be much more difficult to complete on a renovated building versus a new construction.

Mr. Jackson stated that the location of the old library building is the front entrance to the City of Bossier City's governmental offices, and whatever is done with this property should not

detract from the government complex. He further stated that this would be a great location for the 911 center, or Office of Emergency Preparedness. Mr. Glenn Benton stated that the city should have the first opportunity to purchase that building for future use, if not used for a 911 center. Ms. Pam Glorioso stated that the building could also be utilized by the Council on Aging. Mr. Jackson stated that the building could easily be converted to separate spaces to combine services in one central location. Mr. Ford stated that there will be additional discussions as the 911 center project moves forward, and there may be some additional options for that need. He further stated the Johnny Gray Jones building remains unoccupied, and he hopes to have more information about future needs once the upcoming Juvenile Justice Conference is held.

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Mr. Ford provided a map of the shotgun range located next to the Penal Farm on Old Plain Dealing Road, Bossier Parish, advising that Bossier Parish Sheriff's Office personnel recently contacted Mr. Eric Hudson, Parish Engineer, with a request to pave the parking lot near the range with the Sheriff's Office paying for the cost of the material. Mr. Hudson stated that in addition to the parking lot paving request, Sheriff Whittington has also requested permission to improve the existing dirt road on police jury property as marked on the map, to pave it for use in overflow parking, ingress, and egress during events to keep traffic off the public road. He further stated that he will ensure drainage is adequate with the proposed improvement. Mr. Jackson stated that if the only issue is improving a road on parish property with the cost to be paid by the sheriff's office, no additional agreement is needed; however, if crossing a public road is also included in the request, a permanent agreement may be needed.

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Mr. Ford stated that he is touring the old penal farm next week with Mr. Jim Firth, Purchasing Agent, and Dr. Ken Ward, Assistant Parish Administrator, and invited jurors to attend.

Mr. Jackson provided an overview of the penal farm, maximum security jail, and medium security jail history. He stated that the parish pays for all costs of the facilities, except guards' salaries, and during staffing shortages many years ago, the parish agreed to the temporary closing of the penal farm to house parish inmates, with inmates being housed at the maximum or medium facilities. Mr. Jackson stated that the parish pays for everything at the maximum-security jail, and there is a reimbursement schedule for the medium security jail, with the idea that if the parish ever needs to reopen the penal farm that can be done, but the sheriff must provide the staff to operate

the facility. He further stated that there have been a handful of times since the closing of the penal farm when the maximum-security jail was nearly full, and the sheriff's office requested that the parish agree to house parish inmates at the medium security jail at the same rate paid by the state, or \$23.54, per day. Mr. Jackson stated having the penal farm building maintained and in working condition ensures that we have a location for parish inmates to be housed at the ready in case of overflow numbers.

Mr. Firth advised that the cost of maintenance for the penal farm is currently approximately \$5,000 per month, but stated that additional work is necessary if the building is put back to regular use. He further stated that the building can also be used in the event of an emergency, such as a tornado, because it has beds, bathrooms, and other necessities for the housing of people during such an event. Mr. Firth stated that annual maintenance of the facility is approximately \$50,000 to \$60,000.

Mr. Jackson stated that there are two parts to the criminal justice system in Louisiana, and the parish pays for the costs of parish inmates for the first part until the case is adjudicated and then the state takes over the inmate. He further stated that in times of reform, the state has reduced sentences to let state inmates out of jail in an effort to reduce the burden of cost on the state budget; but, with recent changes in crime reform, we will see numbers of arrests increase and the taxpayers will be paying the first part of the costs to house parish inmates again. Mr. Jackson further stated that once the new laws take effect on August 1, 2024, and the number of arrests rise again, the area jails will once again near maximum inmate capacity. He stated that having the penal farm available during those times of increased holding of parish inmates will be beneficial for the parish.

Mr. Tom Salzer inquired as to the maintenance schedule in place and the ability to reopen the penal farm, if necessary. Mr. Firth stated that if the approximate \$60,000 in annual maintenance had not been performed, the cost to reopen would be much greater. He further stated that a more in-depth maintenance schedule is possible if the jury is inclined.

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This concluded the meeting of the Capital Improvements/Building and Grounds Committee Meeting. The meeting was adjourned by the Chairman at 1:06 p.m.

MEGAN C. RAMOS  
INTERIM PARISH SECRETARY

GLENN BENTON, CHAIRMAN  
BOSSIER PARISH POLICE JURY