

BOSSIER PARISH POLICE JURY
POLICY AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
Mr. Doug Rimmer, Chairman
May 15, 2024

The Policy and Procedures Committee of the Bossier Parish Police Jury met on this 15th day of May, 2024, at 10:30 a.m., in the Police Jury Conference Room, Bossier Parish Courthouse, Benton, Louisiana. Mr. Doug Rimmer, Chairman, called the meeting to order, with the following members present:

Mr. Doug Rimmer, Chairman, Mr. Glenn Benton, Mr. Bob Brotherton, Mr. Jimmy Cochran, Ms. Pam Glorioso, Mr. John Ed Jordan, Mr. Chris Marsiglia, Ms. Julianna Parks, Mr. Philip Rodgers, Mr. Tom Salzer, and Mr. Keith Sutton.

Others present for the meeting:

Ms. Ashley Ezell
Ms. Stacie Fernandez
Mr. Jim Firth
Mr. Butch Ford
Ms. Julie Gill
Ms. Monica Grappe

Mr. Eric Hudson
Mr. Patrick Jackson
Mr. Ken Ward
Mr. Rod White
Ms. Lisa Wilson

Mr. Butch Ford, Parish Administrator, stated that the committee previously requested additional information in its consideration of updates to the current vacation policy. He further stated that at the previous meeting, there was discussion of the current policy which provides that employees are allowed to accrue a total of 1,040 hours of unused vacation time, which can either be paid to an employee at retirement or separation, or rolled into an employee's retirement contribution.

Mr. Ford stated that the current employee vacation policy provides for only one week of vacation for the first year of employment. He further stated that the committee previously discussed increasing this to two weeks of vacation time, as well as increasing the amount of vacation time granted incrementally at certain milestones of employment. Mr. Ford stated that Eric Hudson, Parish Engineer, has also prepared a draft for consideration regarding the possibility of giving returning employees credit for tenure earned in previous employment with the parish, as well as tenure credit for new employees coming from other public bodies or private sector employment, depending on their job title and function.

Mr. Philip Rodgers stated that he knows this has been discussed previously, and his belief is that increasing the vacation time to two weeks for the first year is fair. He further recommended that vacation time be increased to three weeks at seven years of service, and four weeks at twenty

years of service. Mr. Rodgers stated that acknowledging an employee's tenure and service with another public body is something that the parish should consider when hiring someone with a history of public employment. Mr. Rodgers also stated that additional vacation time could also be used as a negotiating tool for positions that are more difficult to fill.

Mr. Patrick Jackson, Parish Attorney, stated that there are three items that he would like to have guidance from the committee on in order to move this matter forward:

1. Does the committee wish to increase the amount of vacation time for employees?
2. Does the committee wish to enact a lateral equivalency vacation policy for hiring of certain positions within the parish?
3. Does the committee wish to revise the current policy of maximum accrued vacation time to set a reasonable amount of maximum possible for rollover, and would the committee wish to set a policy to handle the certain number of people who currently have reached the maximum amount?

Mr. Jackson further stated that on the maximum accrued vacation issue, it would be his recommendation that the parish revise its current policies to give those employees who have reached the maximum 1,040 hours of rollover vacation, a certain amount of time to use said hours or elect a one-time payout for those hours to reduce the liability. He stated that his concern would be allowing this to continue for ten additional years could result in an even larger amount of payouts due to salary and cost of living adjustments.

Ms. Julianna Parks clarified that with lateral equivalencies, we could develop a plan for those types of situations. Mr. Jackson stated that we would provide guidance for hiring supervisors to have in hand for those types of situations, and what documentation would be necessary to complete a lateral equivalency assessment and request. Ms. Parks stated that she has done research previously as to how the federal government operates regarding this matter, and since we have the salary study in hand, we should be able to designate high-demand and hard-to-fill positions for which this policy could be beneficial. Ms. Pam Glorioso stated that if a lateral equivalency is considered, she recommends that a probationary period be enacted to prevent a lump sum payment of a large amount of vacation time given to a new employee who might not be a good fit.

The jurors discussed potential solutions to the cap of maximum vacation hours eligible for rollover. Mr. Jackson stated he believes there is a general consensus on the need for a maximum rollover cap and he believes the jurors feel that 160 hours is an acceptable limit. He further stated

that we have 42 employees who are currently past that limit and we need to establish a policy concerning those employees. Mr. Jackson advised that this could be accomplished in many ways, including but not limited to, setting an amount of time to use the difference in hours, accept a lump sum payment, or establish some certain amount of time for each of these 42 employees to decide which option to take.

Ms. Stacie Fernandez, Parish Treasurer, stated that her recommendation would be to set the maximum cap at 160 hours, and the 42 employees who are at the current maximum of 1,040 vacation hours accrued can be given the option of accepting a lump sum payment for the difference now, or elect to roll those hours into their retirement credit at that time. She further stated that this recommendation would be only for those employees who are currently at the maximum of 1,040 accrued vacation hours. Mr. Keith Sutton asked Ms. Fernandez for clarification concerning the cost for the parish to pay out those 42 employees who are at the maximum accrued vacation of 1,040 hours. Ms. Fernandez advised that the total would be \$338,000.00.

Mr. Jackson stated that he wanted to bring this matter back to the committee for some additional guidance, and he believes there are a number of fiscal issues for the jurors to consider as he, along with the staff, continue to research this matter. He further stated that he will move forward with developing a new policy of increasing vacation for new hires, maximum accrued vacation of 160 hours and bring additional information back to the committee concerning the fiscal issues to be considered, along with lateral equivalencies policy.

Mr. Rimmer stated that Mr. Bobby Edmiston, Parish Assessor, previously presented information regarding Act 179 and the potential ad valorem tax exemption for first responders. Mr. Ford advised that this \$2,500.00 exemption applies to the assessed value of the property, and the \$25,000.00 amount is relative to the total value of the property. Mr. Rimmer clarified that per Mr. Edmiston's previous visit, it is important to note that any exemption does not reduce the total amount of taxes collected, it merely transfers the cost of the exemption on to those taxpayers who do not qualify for the exemption. Mr. Philip Rodgers stated that is the reason he would be against the parish approving this exemption. Mr. Keith Sutton clarified that any exemption granted would put the obligation on the remaining taxpayers to make up the difference. Mr. Jackson stated that is exactly the way Mr. Edmiston explained the process of applying millages. He further stated that the amount of tax to be collected does not change, only the amount collected from each taxpayer.

Mr. Jackson stated that no action is required to be taken by the parish, but if there is pushback, the parish does have the ability to hold a public hearing to explain the process of ad valorem taxes and tax millages. He further stated that he will do some additional research on this matter for the jurors and provide a report back.

Mr. Butch Ford advised that the committee asked to revisit Sunday sales of alcohol in the unincorporated areas of the parish, and reminded jurors that the parish has previously considered special permit requests from time to time for sporting events held on Sunday.

Mr. Keith Sutton reported that the City of Bossier is considering updating its ordinances to allow Sunday sales. He further noted that following a meeting with one local large store with a footprint in both Shreveport and Bossier City, it was reported that the stores located in Shreveport earned \$3,700,000.00, while the Bossier City stores earned \$700,000.00, in the first quarter of 2024. Mr. Philip Rodgers inquired as to when the city might be considering this update. Mr. Sutton stated that he is not certain of the date, but has been advised it is currently under consideration. Mr. Rodgers stated that it is his opinion that the police jury should hold off on considering Sunday sales in the parish until the city makes its decision. Mr. Jimmy Cochran recommended that the parish not consider Sunday sales at all, due to the increase in crime and other factors that would result.

Mr. Patrick Jackson stated that there are two categories that need to be considered in this decision: we have bars which cannot open on Sundays in one category, and package stores which cannot sell hard spirits on Sundays, in the other. He further stated that restaurants can open and sell all types of alcohol for on-premises consumption, but if the Parish is considering allowing Sunday sales, consideration for each type of category is needed and what will be allowed. Mr. Jackson also advised that there are some areas in the parish, mostly rural areas, which have elected to stay dry. He further reported that the parish has had calls throughout the years from area businesses requesting that we consider amending the Sunday sales ordinances, and many jurors have also received requests from businesses within their district requesting the same.

Mr. Chris Marsiglia asked for clarification as to any business situated near the city/parish boundary lines, and if approving Sunday sales is adopted by one entity or the other, what will happen if a business is annexed from one entity to the other. Mr. Jackson stated that is a question he cannot answer today without doing some additional research in the matter. He further stated

that this is something that must be considered in reviewing the possibility of Sunday sales in the parish. Mr. Jackson stated that he has also been approached recently regarding whether the parish might consider changing its ordinances if the City of Bossier adopts a new ordinance. Mr. Philip Rodgers clarified that if the City of Bossier does open Sunday sales within its limits and the parish does not follow suit, those businesses in the unincorporated areas of the parish could suffer a loss of revenue.

Mr. Jackson advised that Sunday sales are allowed inside the city for riverboats, and in the unincorporated areas of the parish for marinas. He further added that as the Sunday sales ordinances currently stand, package stores (including grocery and convenience stores) can only sell beer and wine on Sunday. He stated that restaurants can be open and serve all types of alcohol seven days a week because they sell food, but are designated non-smoking, and bars can be open six days a week if they serve a certain amount of food, which allows them to serve all types of alcohol while also allowing smoking due to its bar designation. After further discussion, it was agreed that the parish will hold off on any decisions on this matter pending the outcome of the considerations of the City of Bossier.

This concluded the meeting of the Policy and Procedures Committee Meeting. The meeting was adjourned by the Chairman at 11:22 a.m.

MEGAN C. RAMOS
INTERIM PARISH SECRETARY

DOUG RIMMER, CHAIRMAN
BOSSIER PARISH POLICE JURY