

**PARISH POLICE JURY
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 14, 2022
6:00 P.M.**

The Police Jury of Concordia Parish met this day in regular session convened. There were present the following members:

President:	Collin Edwards
Members:	Maurice Bachus, Joseph Parker, Sr., Willie Yearby, Genesis Allen, Scottie Whittington, Adam Probst, Brad Adams
Absent:	
Secretary Treasurer:	Sandi T. Burley
Invocation:	Mr. Yearby
Pledge of Allegiance:	Mr. Adams

A) President Collin Edwards announced the public hearing for public comments on Ordinance 22-001 – establishing the North Louisiana Railroad Development District open.

B) Public Comments were received. Below is an overview of the questions, answers and discussions that took place:

Kevin Friloux spoke first reading from his letter to the newspaper and submitted to the Parish office with his position against the railroad. Stating that differing planning and oversight districts already exist and the board would be able to set their own salaries and compensation. Mr. Friloux also stated that he felt the constituents were already being taxed to death and small businesses and residential homes would be taxed further, referencing the Commissions ability to propose up to 5 mills as ad valorem taxes on homes and businesses that are not homestead exempt.

Mr. Bryant Killen who is leading the task of creating the commission stated the ordinance would give the railroad district the ability to propose a millage. The matter would still have to be placed on a ballot and voted by the residents of the parish. Mr. Killen was also asked, “What has been done or proposed (to build the railroad to Concordia Parish)?” Mr. Killen responded that the plans were still in the infancy stages. Madison and Tensas parishes would use the “old bed” where possible. The railroad would come through Ferriday and to the industrial park toward the port. The commission would be made up of two members from each of the parishes (Madison, East Carroll, Tensas, and Concordia) and those eight would vote in the 9th member.

Vidalia Mayor Buz Craft was also in attendance. Mr. Craft state that whether the Jurors voted yes or no, this is the only route to go. The Jurors should be serious about the future of the Parish envisioning past the next ten years.

Mr. Killen further stated that there is industry looking to relocate due to the location along the Mississippi River. This industry will help the economy.

Mr. Corbett asked where the funding would come from to build a rail line between the four parishes to the river. Mr. Killen described that there were \$3 billion in funding available to build the economy. He further explained that in 2011, the Mississippi reached a record high. In 2012, a record low. This caused problems for farmers to barge their crops. Every parish has a different reason to bring the railroad. There are also additional funds available that can be used as local match to funding available.

Tax Assessor Mr. Jerry Clark spoke on the millages. Using prior year assessments, 5 mills would bring in approximately \$780,000 in annual revenue. Mr. Killen responded that he was not here to levee a tax. However, in East Carroll Parish, 5 of the top 10 tax payers are in and around their port.

Resident Jeff Britt asked Mr. Killen who is mainly backing this initiative. Stating he had spoken with DOTD and was present at the monthly meeting of the Port Commissions. Mr. Britt asked about the estimated costs for the end results of the project. Mr. Killen responded stating that \$20 million was being allocated for a railroad rehabilitation project in Lake Providence. Mr. Killen further stated that he had an estimate but with current inflation, final numbers weren't calculated.

Mr. Killen stated the plan is to get the board created first. Mr. Craft echoed his actions by stating that until the board is created, no funds can be requested. Juror Parker asked once the board is created, how will it be funded? Mr. Killen responded that a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) with Vidalia and Tensas ports would be a financial benefit.

Juror Neal asked who would own the track? Mr. Killen stated the district could own the tracks or if the ports are willing, they could own the tracks and the commission could lease to operators.

Mr. Craft stated the biggest benefit is indirect as the economic development will lead to spending as new infrastructure is built and maintained.

Mr. Parker asked Mr. Killen if he had spoken with the Mayors of Clayton and Ferriday as they would be impacted on the revitalization of the railroad through their respective municipalities.

Mr. Killen stated he has not met with Mayors of any entity but met with East Carroll Police Jury on the 8th where they adopted their ordinance. He will be at the Tensas Police Jury on the 22nd, and Madison Parish Police Jury on the 28th.

Ms. Burley asked Mr. Edwards if she could bring questions and comments received to the Parish office forward. Ms. Burley stated the top question received was about the millage. The second question was about eminent domain. Will this be used and how will it affect the residents? Mr. Killen responded that land owners would be compensated based on a proposed map run like a port. Mr. Clark stated that original track is gone in Concordia Parish so it could not be used. Mr. Killen further commented that no board is going to elect to go through someone's home or business.

Ms. Burley also brought forward concerns that this would lead to building "Buz's Industrial Park". With questions over millages being given up to expand Syrah and the Parish and the municipalities it supports with sales tax are receiving no direct tax money. However, the Town of Vidalia receives 2.5% sales tax from Syrah, while the Parish receives 20% of its proportionate millage over the next ten years.

Mr. Craft stated that he hated to see heartburn over successes. He envisions the Parish and the Municipalities working together.

Mr. Neal asked if this would be commercial and/or passenger trains. Mr. Killen stated only commercial use is planned.

Mr. Yearby further commented that Concordia Parish has lost businesses because of no railroad system. Mr. Parker echoed that it is sad the railroad had to go away in the first place.

C) There being no further public comments, Mr. Edwards closed the Public Hearing.

- 1) Ms. Burley conducted the roll call and a quorum was declared present.
- 2) A motion was made by Mr. Probst seconded by Mr. Yearby to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2022 meeting as distributed. Motion carried unanimously.
- 3) Consider for Adoption, Ordinance 2022-01 – establishing the Northeast Louisiana Railroad Development District. A motion was made by Mr. Parker to table the vote on the ordinance to allow Mr. Killen to reach out to others in the Parish (Mayors of Ferriday and Clayton). The motion was seconded by Mr. Neal and carried unanimously.
- 4) A motion was made by Mr. Yearby seconded by Mr. Neal to approve the renewal of the Restoration Tax Abatement Program Application for Weeks Properties Restoration. Motion carried unanimous with Mr. Probst abstaining.
- 5) A request from the Concordia Fire District #2 was received to approve the renewal of appointments for Mr. Virgil Barnes and Mr. Harvey Cowan for another term. A motion was made by Mr. Neal, seconded by Mr. Yearby and carried unanimously to approve the appointments.
- 6) Committee Updates and Reports were next discussed.
 - a) Ratify Purchase Orders and Bank Statements – The Finance Committee had reviewed the purchase orders and bank statements and financial updates were distributed to the Jurors prior to the meeting to review. A motion was made by Mr. Probst seconded by Mr. Adams to ratify the purchase orders and bank statements as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
- 7) Projects of the Parish were next discussed. Ms. Burley presented an update on current projects.

Brushy Bayou – Jordan, Kaiser, and Sessions had been notified to be present for the current meeting as requested. Confirmation had been received by Mr. Hayden Kaiser that they would be in attendance. No one from Jordan, Kaiser and Sessions (JKS) was present at the meeting. Mr. Parker asked for a motion to give Ms. Burley the authority to follow up with DOTD on the status of responses needed from JKS and if they had been received. If no submissions had been made by JKS to DOTD, then have Ms. Burley contact our attorney for further action. The motion was seconded by Ms. Allen and carried unanimously.

 - a. Resolution 22-007 was presented for review and adoption. The resolution is needed by the Parish to uphold State and Federal Share Allocations for match funds where applicable for the life of the proposed projects. A motion was made by Mr. Yearby seconded by Mr. Bachus to approve the resolution as presented. Motion carried unanimously. (See Addendum for Resolution 22-007.)
 - b. Ms. Burley asked for the Jurors to determine a date for annual Ethics and Sexual Harassment Training.
 - c. ARPA – A request was received from Monterey Rural Water System (MWRS) requesting a portion of the allocated funds be used toward obtaining reverse osmosis components needed to run the water system efficiently. Proper quotes were obtained and submitted to the Parish for review. A

motion was made by Mr. Yearby seconded by Mr. Parker to approve the funding allocation. Motion carried unanimously with Mr. Adams abstaining.

8) Ordinance Violations of the Parish were next discussed. The following was brought forward: Whittington – Property at 215 Ron Road and property owned by C. Tucker of Ron Road need culverts replaced. Current culverts are not adequate and need replacing due to obstruction of proper drainage.

Probst – Clean up on Audubon Acres is needed. Addresses will be provided for proper citation.

Allen – 304 Black Bayou Road – raw sewage flowing into ditch from a sewer treatment behind the residence.

Neal – 106 Levee Height- needs mowing, clean up; 114 Chandler Road – needs items along the shoulder of the road removed out of easement as they are affecting proper drainage.

A motion was made by Mr. Probst seconded by Ms. Allen to approve the citations of the ordinance violations as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

9) Under the Secretary / Treasurer's report, Ms. Burley presented the following:

- a) Audit – Related Parties Questionnaire needed to be completed by all Jurors and returned as part of the annual audit.
- b) Resolution 22-008 – Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire was presented for review and adoption as part of the annual audit requirements. A motion was made by Mr. Yearby seconded by Mr. Parker to adopt the resolution as presented. Motion carried unanimously. (See Addendum for Resolution 22-008.)
- c) Ms. Burley notified the Jurors and those present of the passing of Mr. Jerry Stallings who had served as the Justice of the Peace for District 4 for over 20 years. Mr. Stallings was recognized for his hard work and dedication to the parish. Ms. Burley informed the Jurors that the State Supreme Court had been in contact with the Parish Office about the vacancy and would reach out to other Justice of the Peace's to cover his duties until an election could be held.

10) Work Orders of the Parish were brought forward by Mr. Tony Guillory, Superintendent. These were:

610 – 45 yards on Ellard; 15 yards on Poole Road, Ferriday; 30 yards on Hailey Road; 8 yards on Greathouse Road ditch; 3 yards on Mooselodge; 5 yards on Ron Road; 3 yards on Doty Road
Pitrun – 3 yards on Jones Road ditch

Culverts – 15x34 needed on Brookewater; 24x36 needed on South Prong

Ms. Burley asked for time to see if the culvert needed for South Prong would be covered under the DR 4462 project before purchasing.

A motion was made by Ms. Allen seconded by Mr. Neal to approve the work orders as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

11) Work Orders needed for the Parish were brought forward by the Jurors.

Whittington – Gravel and drainage work needed on Old Boat Camp Road.

Mr. Ryan McGraw, resident – was present and asked for road work needed on Minorca Road. Ms. Burley also informed Mr. McGraw that work was planned for this road under DR 4462.

Adams – Poole Road, Monterey needs reclaim and maintenance.

A motion was made by Mr. Yearby seconded by Ms. Allen to approve the work orders presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

12) Correspondence and Public Comments were next open for discussion. There were none.

13) There being no further items to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Parker seconded by Mr. Whittington to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

Sandi T. Burley, Secretary / Treasurer