

**CONCORDIA PARISH POLICE JURY
SPECIAL MEETING
MARCH 16, 2015
6:00 P.M.**

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

Melvin Ferrington President

Tommy Tiffie Vice-President

Members: Carey Cook, Willie Dunbar, Jimmy Jernigan, Joe Parker
and Whest Shirley

Absent: Jerry Beatty
Randy Temple

Secretary Treasurer: Kevin M. Friloux

Invocation: Mr. Jernigan

Pledge of Allegiance: Mr. Tiffie

Mr. Ferrington informed the audience that the purpose of the special meeting was to have a general discussion with members of the Concordia Hospital Service District Board and its plans for the future of the Riverland Medical Center. People across the parish are concerned about Riverland Medical Center and there are numerous rumors throughout the community about the hospital and what will happen to it in the future. He then referred to members of the hospital board.

Mr. Jim Graves, chairman of the Concordia Hospital Service District addressed the jury. On behalf of the board he advised the jury that there had been a lack of communication on the part of the board and he assumed that liability. He further advised that there have been no decisions made on any relocation, tearing down or new construction in regards to the current Riverland Hospital. He emphasized that there are obsolete facilities and outdated equipment; that the facility is old and improvements need to be made if the hospital is going to attract qualified medical personnel. He said most rural hospitals are not doing well, but Riverland is holding its own. A recent survey indicated that 20% of all parish hospital business is going to Riverland while 80% is going to Natchez or elsewhere. He informed the jury that in order for the hospital to proceed with any types of improvements and upgrading facilities an extensive study would be required.

Mr. Parker and Mr. Jernigan presented issues including the lack of communication, maintenance issues, bidding out big jobs, funding for any improvements and will the hospital be moving. Mr. Graves responded by saying again that the board will work to improve communications and keep the jury informed of any issues as they come up. He again said no decisions have been made on moving the hospital and that consultants are looking into possible funding sources if major decisions are reached.

Mr. Jack Stayer, attorney, who represents the rural hospital coalition and now represents the district addressed the jury and said he represented many rural hospitals and that those hospitals in general are under siege nationwide and many are closing. In order to avoid this and move forward with upgrading facilities an extensive study is needed. He then referred to the medical staff for comments.

Dr. Carrie Bonomo, medical representative on the hospital board, questioned the hospital personnel's ability to deliver quality medical care with the condition of the equipment and facilities. She implored the jury to carefully consider the needs of the community with respect to the outdated equipment and physical facility. She further advised that the medical staff and technicians are at Riverland because they want to be and want to be able to invite other medical professionals to the area, but with the current facility it is not possible.

Mr. Fred Butcher, hospital board member, commented that as a board member, he was not informed of any plans to move the hospital except through the newspapers. He advised that he and others believe the hospital is in the right location and do not favor moving the hospital and prefer Riverland to remain in Ferriday.

Reverend Johnnie Brown, Town of Ferriday alderman, state that he had not received any information from the hospital district and was at a loss as to why the board would even consider moving the hospital. He urged the jury to fight to keep the hospital where it is and to support any attempt to finance improvements. He further asked if any questions had been raised as to the financing of new facilities. The response was that financing options are now being reviewed.

Mr. Ferrington called for other comments. There being none he advised that better communication was in order with the jury and the board and that the jury would be receptive to support the hospital district in its efforts to improve the hospital whether through renovation, a new wing or even a new hospital, however being that the hospital not be moved and remain in Ferriday.

There being no further business a motion was made by Mr. Parker seconded by Mr. Jernigan that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

Kevin M. Friloux, Secretary Treasurer