

OCTOBER 14, 2024

NEW IBERIA, LOUISIANA

IBERIA PARISH COUNCIL
SPECIAL FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Special Finance Committee Meeting was called to order by Finance Chairman Scott Ransonet at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Those members recorded as PRESENT were as follows:

Francis "Tommy" Pollard, Sr., Michael R. Landry, Marcus "Bruce" Broussard, Lloyd Brown, Warren P. Gachassin, Jr., Dustin Suire, James P. Trahan, Scott Ransonet, Brock Pellerin, Lady Fontenette Brown (entered the meeting at 6:07 p.m.), and Caymen Crappell.

Those members recorded as ABSENT were as follows:

Natalie Broussard, Brian P. Napier, and Chad Maturin.

Others in Attendance:

Parish President M. Larry Richard, Budget Officer Michelle Suire, CAO Milton "Bo" Belanger, Fire Chief Guy Bonin, Library Director Marjorie Hills, Mosquito Control Director Herff Jones, and Chairman of Acadiana Fairgrounds Pat Carlyon and Arena Manager Courtney Boudreaux, Emergency 911 Communications Director Prescott Marshall, and Animal and Rabies Control Director Amanda Istre.

BUSINESS TO BE DISCUSSED

1. Initial review and discussion of the 2025 Proposed Budgets, as follows:

a. Fire Protection District Fund Budget

Fire Chief Guy Bonin stated that their department cut two (2) employees last year due to increases in the budget. Insurance was increased to \$128,000, vehicle insurance increased to \$44,000, and retirement increased to \$44,000.

Chief Bonin stated that he budgeted \$15,000 for rescue equipment to outfit the truck donated by the Village of Loreauville and \$10,000 for miscellaneous equipment.

Chief Bonin stated that \$10,250 in funds will be sent to the Village of Loreauville, Town of Jeanerette and the Town of Delcambre for their assistance to Iberia Parish with daily calls.

Chief Bonin also stated that there is a 2.5% increase mandated by the State of Louisiana for cost of living increase.

Chief Bonin stated that their department is extremely short handed and needs to hire an additional five (5) firemen.

Fire Protection District Program Fund balances for the 2025 Fiscal Year:

- Beginning fund balance of \$4.4 million
- Deficit of \$191,872
- Ending fund balance of \$4.2 million

b. Public Library Fund Budget

Library Director Marjorie Hills stated there is a small increase for personnel services due to allotting for a second person at the Loreauville Branch as a safety measure.

Director Hills also stated that an increase for part-time personnel since their rate of pay has been at \$7.25 since it was implemented.

Director Hills stated that the funds for the new roof is not being carried over. They hired a new architectural firm to complete the work before the end of the year.

Director Hills also stated other items increased were insurance, utilities, electronic resources such as electronic books and new programs, library programming for summer and adult workshops.

Councilman Warren P. Gachassin, Jr. Recommended developing a plan in the event that additional funds are needed for expenses and maintenance repairs. He also recommended that she should have an architect look at the buildings as preventative maintenance.

Director Hills stated that she is anticipating to hold another election in March of 2025 for ad valorem taxes that would be used for maintenance repairs as well as various programs to bring new interest.

Councilman Marcus "Bruce" Broussard asked Director Hills to explain the architecture issue with the roof.

Director Hills stated that the architect could not complete the roof repair in the time frame needed.

Councilman Michael R. Landry commended Director Hills for her efforts to hold another election for proposed ad valorem taxes and believes that with advertisement, it will pass this time.

Parish President M. Larry Richard acknowledged that Director Hills is doing a great job educating the community with new programs offered.

Councilman Marcus "Bruce" Broussard asked Director Hills to explain the \$100,000 allocated for books. He asked if these funds are to replace books and electronic books.

Director Hills confirmed that Books line item will be for new books and electronic books. She stated that they buy multiple copies so individuals are not waiting for books to be returned to the Library.

Councilman Scott Ransonet requested Budget Officer Michelle Suire to explain the \$77,000 for Contribution Pension line item.

Budget Officer Michelle Suire explained that Iberia Parish Government will not collect any taxes for 2025 as it is based on ad valorem taxes collected. Some individuals pay back taxes from other years so there may be money received and may not have to adjust the budget if enough funds are received on back taxes.

Public Library Program Fund balances for the 2025 Fiscal Year:

- Beginning fund balance of \$5.9 million
- Deficit in 2025 of \$2.6 million
- Ending fund balance of \$3.2 million

c. Rabies Control Fund Budget

Rabies Control Director Amanda Istre stated that the uniform fund was decreased in the amount of \$250. She also stated that there was a 2.5% increase in medicare and parochial retirement line items.

Councilman Marcus "Bruce" Broussard reminded everyone that the Rabies Control Fund Budget is funded from Health Unit Fund Budget and is very limited.

Parish President M. Larry Richard informed the Council that a Special Session will take place next month. One of the topics will be inventory taxes where Parishes can opt in and opt out. This will be a great opportunity for Iberia Parish.

Councilman Scott Ransonet questioned Director Istre what the animal intake is at the Animal Control Shelter.

Director Istre confirmed that there are currently 560 animals at the facility.

Councilman Michael R. Landry asked Director Istre if they rode around to catch animals or waited for calls to pick up animals.

Director Istre said that the Animal Control Shelter waits for people to report that animals need to be picked up. She also stated that their department is currently short two employees at this time.

Councilman Brock Pellerin thanked Director Istre for services provided to Iberia Parish.

Rabies Control Program Fund balances for the 2025 Fiscal Year:

- Beginning fund balance of \$52,675
- Deficit in 2025 of \$1,257
- Ending fund balance of \$51,418

d. Mosquito Abatement District Fund Budget

Mosquito Abatement District Director Herff Jones announced that this is Iberia Parish's 18th season. He stated that this is the only department that holds two fund budgets. One fund balance is for surplus being distributed from the previous year and the other fund balance is the proposed fund balance for the current year.

Director Jones stated that we are over the \$30 million mark and it is very helpful to unincorporated municipalities outside of Parishwide Drainage including the City of Jeanerette, Village of Loreauville, and Delcambre. We will continue to manage our model for our program to maintain that surplus stream due to the importance to Iberia Parish.

Director Jones stated that their department conducts routine operations Monday through Friday, and sometimes on Saturday and Sundays for festivals. If constituents are having issues, we prefer to obtain the permission of property owners to spray on private property. Please have your constituents give our office a call if they are having issues.

Director Jones stated that they are still dependent on aerial mosquito control which is conducted by air. He further stated that Iberia Parish has a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with Vermilion

Parish Mosquito Control where they purchased an aircraft and it is shared with their Parish.

Director Jones stated that the in-House aerial budget is \$150,000 with a \$100,000 savings. The Contract amount is \$250,000, with a 74% savings. There will be an increase related to insurance and chemicals.

Director Jones further stated that Iberia Parish is proposing a bid packet for aerial drone spraying.

Councilman Warren Gachassin, Jr. commended Director Jones for his service and mosquito control efforts to Iberia Parish.

Mosquito Abatement District Fund balances for the 2025 Fiscal Year:

- Beginning fund balance of \$2 million
- Deficit projected in 2025 of \$33,728
- Ending fund balance of \$2 million

e. Communications District Fund Budget

Communications District Director Prescott Marshall stated that the Communications District Fund balance income is based upon state statute for cell phone fees and by ordinance that covers land lines operated by businesses and regular home land lines as well as pre-paid phones. They also charge for dispatcher services provided to the Fire Protection District and The City of New Iberia.

Director Marshall thanked his employees for their service to Iberia Parish.

Director Marshall stated that there are some potential issues that may be incurred for switching from a phone-based system to an internet-based system. It is anticipated to cost approximately \$70,000 per year.

Councilman Francis "Tommy" Pollard, Sr. asked if the Communications District will be utilizing AT&T.

Director Marshall confirmed that the 911 calls are received through AT&T. He further stated that rather than just phone calls being received, the internet allows the Call Center to receive additional information such as photos and messages.

Parish President M. Larry Richard thanked Director Marshall for his years of service for Iberia Parish.

Communications District Fund balances for the 2025 Fiscal Year:

- Beginning fund balance of \$2.6 million
- Projecting a surplus in 2025 of \$91,365
- Ending fund balance of \$2.7 million

f. Acadiana Fairgrounds Commission Fund

Acadiana Fairgrounds Arena Manager Courtnie Boudreaux stated that that they are beginning the 25th year of operation of Sugarena. They are planning an event to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Sugarena on May 9-11, 2025 and estimating to spend approximately \$15,000 to host this event.

Director Boudreaux stated that other increases include insurance, salary increase for maintenance personnel and part-time position.

Councilman Warren P. Gachassin, Jr. stated that he is concerned that we are adopting a budget that still has a deficit and at some point we have to address this. He stated that the building has aged and recently had busted water lines.

Councilman Warren P. Gachassin, Jr. requested that Arena Manager Boudreaux explain what the \$125,000 in additional funds were used for.

Director Boudreaux stated that the \$125,000 is going to be used for permanent fencing around the facility. National rodeos will pay more rent but it is a liability issue if cows go onto the main highway.

Acadiana Fairground Commission Fund balance, as follows:

- Beginning fund balance started with deficit of \$191,268
- Projected surplus in 2025 of \$8,766
- Projected \$200,034 deficit

g. Economic Development District #1 Fund

Budget Officer Michelle Suire explained that the revenues received for Economic Development District No. 1 are from the Sales Tax. It is projected that Iberia Parish will receive approximately \$4 Million in sales tax and \$170,000 in investment income for 2025.

Budget Officer Michelle Suire stated budget carryovers from the 2024 Budget will include Lewis Street Widening Project, LaSalle Hanger Extension, Admiral Doyle/Lewis Street, and ARA Airport Access Road. She further stated that Labit Road Bridge is projected to be completed by the end of this year. If uncompleted, this balance will be carried over to 2025.

Budget Officer Michelle Suire stated that expenses for Economic Development District No. 1 include expenses for auditors, indirect cost, bond payments, and CEA Agreement with IEDA and EDD bonds.

Economic Development District #1 Fund balance, as follows:

- Beginning fund balance of \$11.5 million
- Projected surplus in 2025 of \$769,783
- Ending fund balance of \$12.2 million

A motion was made by Mr. Warren P. Gachassin, Jr., seconded by Mr. Francis "Tommy" Pollard, Sr., that the Finance Committee adjourn.

This motion having been submitted to a vote, the vote thereon was as follows:

YEAS: Francis "Tommy" Pollard, Sr., Michael R. Landry, Marcus "Bruce" Broussard, Lloyd Brown, Warren P. Gachassin, Jr., Dustin Suire, James P. Trahan, Scott Ransonet, Brock Pellerin, Lady Fontenette Brown, and Caymen Crappell.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: Natalie Broussard, Brian P. Napier, and Chad Maturin.

And the motion was declared adopted this 12th day of June, 2024.

Finance Chairman Scott Ransonet declared the Special Finance Committee Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THE FOREGOING TO BE EXACT AND TRUE:

Clerk of the Council