

MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2021 AT 1:30 P.M.

ST. TAMMANY GOVERNMENT COMPLEX

21454 KOOP DR., BUILDING B, MANDEVILLE, LA.

Call to Order by Honorable Rykert Toledano, Chairman

**Roll Call: David Fitzgerald ABSENT
Rykert O. Toledano, Jr.
Cheryl Tanner
James “Jimmie” Davis, III
Maureen “MO” O’Brien ABSENT
Jerry Binder
Jacob “Jake” Airey**

ALSO PRESENT: Lorino

-Toledano – made an opening statement to the different agencies.

1. Budget Discussions:

a. St. Tammany Parish Library

-Kelly Laroca – Director, along with 3 other members presented on behalf of the Library. Laroca spoke about how fines from overdue books don’t account for much income. They expect more ad valorem taxes. They have received some grants and donations in 2021 that they do not expect in 2022. She explained budget items that have increased significantly. She explained that there would be no cost of living raised, but there would be merit raised between 1.5-3%.

-Tanner – asked if the millage rolled up or down.

-Laroca – answered that they have 5.78 mills and they rolled back in 2016 and 2020.

-Davis – asked if the fund balance is a reserve or if it is being spent.

-Laroca – explained that \$2.5 million is used in the beginning of the year for cash flow.

-Davis – asked about open positions.

-Laroca - explained the difficulty in filling open positions.

-Toledano – asked about leaved accrual, and Laroca explained it to the committee.

-Davis – asked about plans to increase the size of the Lacombe library

b. 22nd Judicial District Court

-Amber Mitchell – Judicial Administrator, Judge AJ Hand, Judge Richard Schwartz, and Judge Dawn Amacker presented on behalf of the 22 JDC.

-Judge Hand – gave the presentation of the 22 JDC budget questions. He explained that the cost of living raise is the biggest budgetary change.

-Davis – asked if they could raise fines and court costs in the Judicial Expense Fund.

-Long – made clarifications regarding cost of living raise, court costs, and fines and that all agencies were reduced by 25%.

-The Judges explained that they were not aware that the budget would be less than requested.

-Toledano – asked Long to explain how they came upon the figures in the budget.

-Long – explained how the Revenue Review Committee came upon the numbers.

-Judge Amacker – said that what is essentially being done is defunding the courts.

-Parish President Mike Cooper – explained the reasoning for the decreasing of the budget.

c. St. Tammany Parish Sheriff

-Andrea Cosse – Chief Financial Officer - presented on behalf of the Sheriff's office. She showed that the budget had been stagnate. She mentioned that the sheriff made changes in 2018. She explained that the goal is to help get to the right number for the jail. The Sheriff's office feels that it should be \$12.5 million, not \$7.3 million that is budgeted. They want to avoid court costs associated with a lawsuit. She explained that the fund balance in the jail was depleted in June 2020. She also explained the proposed budget. She mentioned that expenditures for 2022 are \$400,000 higher than 2021. She said there is a \$5.2 million budget shortfall. she was hoping to get some money reallocated, but it is too late.

-Toledano - asked if she thinks that they have maximized their budget.

-Cosse – answered yes, unless they send Parish inmates to another facility.

-Toledano – asked if there are any other streams of income available.

-Cosse - said they only have 1 grant which is the re-entry program.

-Davis – asked does the contract expire at the end of the year or does it have a clause to extend.

-Cosse – said they would like for it to have a clause that extends it because now it goes from \$8 million to \$0, but they are asking \$12 million.

-Davis – asked what is the general fund balance.

-Cosse – looked in the budget book and it is +\$20 million.

-Council discussion ensued.

d. District Attorney

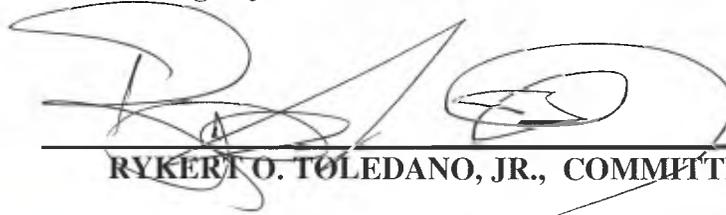
-Warren Montgomery – District Attorney and Tony Sanders presented on behalf of the District Attorney's office.

-Montgomery – mentioned that we have a very serious problem. They tried to figure out how to solve the problem. He has thought about going out for his own tax. He is upset that the tax failed, but is not upset at anyone in particular. He spoke on ways to increase revenues: drug courts diversion program expansion, ticket diversion program. He has sent in a request to use the full year's funding in the first 6 months. They may have to file a lawsuit, but they don't want to have to file one.

-Lorino – said if we had the money, we would give it to them, but we don't have it. He understands if they have to file a lawsuit. He hopes the DA would consider the money they have and will go out for his own tax and will not have to sue.

-Council discussion ensued.

-There being no further business, meeting adjourned at the call of the Committee Chairman.



RYKERT O. TOLEDANO, JR., COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN



KATRINA L. BUCKLEY, COUNCIL CLERK