

AVOYELLES PARISH POLICE JURY  
REGULAR SESSION, held in the meeting Room in the Courthouse, Marksville, La  
Tuesday, March 14, 2023

The Police Jury of the Parish of Avoyelles, State of Louisiana, met in Regular Session, in the Meeting Room, Courthouse, Marksville, La, on Tuesday, March 14, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.

There were present: Mark Borrel, Bobby Bordelon, Jacob Coco, Kirby Roy, McKinley Keller, Darrell Wiley, Clyde Benson, Glenn McKinley, John Earles, Laura Gaspard- Assistant Secretary/Treasurer, Rayford Laborde- Avoyelles Parish Planning Commission; Joseph Frank- Director, Kevin Bordelon- Civil Work Director, Jenny Falls, Twyla Lemoine, Jimmy Landry, Jonathan Gaspard-Assistant District Attorney, Jen Piazza- Legislative Aide, District Attorney Charles Riddle, Ronald Coco, Amy Guidry, Teryl St. Romain, Sheriff David Duzat, Jermaine Williams, Rev. Allen Holmes, Anthony Desselle, Registrar of Voters Gloria Moreau, Clerk of Court Connie Desselle, Francis Keller, Tina Miller, Micah White, Butch Sullivan, Johnny Rogers, and Amy Guidry Guidry

Absent were: None

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance by McKinley Keller, followed by a prayer led by Juror Mark Borrel.

Roll call by Secretary-Treasurer.

On motion by John Earles, seconded by Darrell Wiley, to adopt the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on February 14, 2023, printed in the “Weekly News”, and mailed to all Jurors. On vote, the motion carried.

On motion by Glenn McKinley, seconded by Mark Borrel, to accept the minutes of the Tourist Commission Meeting held January 10, 2023, as presented. On vote, the motion carried.

On motion by Jacob Coco, seconded by Clyde Benson, to accept a Proclamation congratulating the Avoyelles Public Charter School Vikings on winning a State Championship.

The financial report was given by the Secretary/Treasurer.

On motion by Mark Borrel, seconded by Darrell Wiley, to accept the Financial Report given by the Secretary Treasurer. On vote, the motion carried.

Robert Bertholl resident of Breanna Lane has been experiencing litter on his property. The Levee Board refused to allow Garbage Truck to access the Levee to pick up garbage for others residences. Jermaine Williams (Waste Connections) advised for the safety of the drivers he will not allow a truck to cross the levee. Sheriff Duzat said he was buying a truck and would send it to pick up the garbage, Civil Works Director interjected by saying the parish could not accept residential garbage at its facility in Mansura. District Attorney Riddle offered to write letters to those residents who were bring their garbage near Mr. Bertholl’s property. Mr. Williams with Waste Connection advised the Jury and Mr. Bertholl’s he would have his office send the letters.

Rev. Allen Holmes, best known for his role in the Avoyelles Public School desegregation case pointed out to the Jury and the audience, the Petition to elect a Commission to write a Home Rule Charter was certified illegally. Rev. Holmes requested the Secretary/Treasurer read La. R.S. 18:3 (highlighted areas) as follows:

“Every petition submitted to a registrar of voters for certification shall contain the following information:

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(1) The handwritten signature of the voter who is signing the petition; however, if a person is unable to write, the incapacitated person shall affix his mark to the petition and the person circulating the petition shall affix the name of the incapacitated person provided he does so in the presence of two witnesses who shall also sign their names as witnesses to the mark.

(2) The date the voter signed the petition.

(3) The signer's ward/district/precinct and date of birth.

(4) The address at which the signer is registered to vote, including municipal number, apartment number, rural route, and box number.

(5) Name of the signer either typed or legibly written.

(6) Name of the person who witnessed and who obtained the signature.

(7) Date on which the person witnessed and obtained the signature.

Rev. Holmes who sought the advice of attorney stated over 2,500 signatures on the petition did not contain the signer's ward/district/precinct, which by law would make it uncertifiable and the petition should be thrown out. He asked Registrar Gloria Moreau for comments. Mrs. Moreau stated she was aware of La RS 18:3 and the information was not included in the majority of almost 3,000 signatures and she treated the petition like she would treat mail in ballots. Her office does not reject those, and that same information is also required.

Mr. Wiley (Juror Darrell): How many signatures lacked the ward/district/precinct?

Mr. Allen Holmes: about 99%.

Mrs. Moreau (Registrar of Voters): 238 signatures indicated "something" in that field, referring to the block on the petition labeled "Singers Ward/District/Precinct", 94 had correct information, 23 were not correct and 121 only has their ward.

\*\*\* 2,455 signatures were accepted and certified by the Registrar\*\*\*

Mr. Wiley (Juror Darrell): So, all the information required by a so-called petition was not followed?

Mrs. Moreau: Yep, I mean, the answer is yes.

Mr. Bordelon (Juror Bobby): Why did you accept them? I don't understand why you accepted them if it wasn't correct.

Mr. Wiley: Yeah, that's my thinking.

Mr. Bordelon: That's the problem I have.

Mrs. Moreau: So, so, I would just like to uh, all of them were missing, you could say everything was missing from all those signatures.

Mr. Bordelon: You can't accept them if they aren't right.

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Mrs. Moreau: Well, we can't accept mail in ballots either, but we do.

Mr. Bordelon: But you shouldn't. If you're not supposed to, you shouldn't.

Mrs. Moreau: I understand what you're saying buy my point of view, we accept mail ballots, we don't want to throw peoples mailbox ballots out.

Mr. Bordelon: So, you accept them illegally? Ah...

Mrs. Moreau: Well...I will say this, the discretion is nowhere in the law, the discretion is left up the Parish Board of Election Supervisors that counts ballots on election night. If we threw out every ballot that didn't have ward and precinct there would be no ballots that were counted, but that's not you know, an excuse. I'm kind of giving you my thought process.

Mr. Wiley; But isn't all this required on the petition itself?

Mrs. Moreau: The, the ward and precinct you will never, never, uh... people will never, they just don't know that.

Mr. Wiley: Is it on the petition itself? Like a column?

Mrs. Moreau: Yes, yes.

Mr. Wiley: Like ward, so they just skipped that?

Mrs. Moreau: On the petition sheet that they used.

Mr. Wiley: I'm not, I'm not blaming you, I'm going to say this, this is my opinion, I'm one of nine. You know the guys that were passing this petition around should have took care of this.

Mrs. Moreau: I can't understand they are not getting it because we deal with this every day.

Mr. Wiley: I am all for the will of the people, but that's a law, I'm not going to do anything that's against the law.

Juror Glenn McKinley: Well, what I'm hearing is that they (Petition Circulators) was going around with this petition was more anxious to get a name instead of explaining what it was for. They were running people down in stores saying sign this if you have holes on your road, they would sign and walk away, nobody verifying signature, no identification, just sign it and go to the next person. So right here that's telling you it was done illegally.

Mrs. Moreau: I don't know, you know, I m not privileged to that information you just talked about.

Mr. Glenn McKinley: Again, like Darrell said, I'm all for it if the people of the parish want this, you know, but if we're going to do it, lets do it legal. If it's done illegally, we going to go to court and be right where we are now. By the time its settled, I might be in my grave. A lot of us might be dead and gone. I was told and people were witnessing how this petition was going around it was not being done legally.

President Roy: Mr. Charles...

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District Attorney Riddle: What I'm about to say is going to make both sides... are going to be mad at me, okay.

Mr. Roy: They already are.

Mr. Riddle: What's new. In 2020 there was an election suit filed against me and the Registrar and the State of Louisiana stating they didn't put the ward and precinct, okay. There was something like three hundred something absentee ballots that didn't have it. The Court threw it out, threw out the whole suit. I hate to tell y'all but the Police Jury doesn't overturn what's been certified, that's the part, that's going to make this side (points to the Jury) unhappy. To make the other side unhappy (points towards the audience) you need to wait for the attorney that is doing the resolution.

Juror Mark Borrel: Yes, that's what I thought.

Mr. Riddle: And, at that point you accept it because you don't have discretion. You can't determine if it's legal or not. Now, you have the perfect right, as any individual who is registered to vote in this parish, and he may have a very valid claim to file a petition. It's not going to take years. I can tell you it will be done in thirty days. Elections suits are handled on an expedited basis. This will be handled quickly, not years. Okay. The Police Jury cannot overturn a certified petition. Now, you may disagree why she certified it, you may disagree with state saying its certified. It has to be decided in Court.

Mr. Glenn McKinley: Charlie, you want us to certify an illegal petition?

Mr. Riddle: No.

Mr. McKinley: That's what you're doing.

Mr. Riddle: No, I'm not asking you to certify it. It's been certified.

Mr. Kinley: I'm mean not certify it, but you want us to accept it.

Mr. Riddle: I'm not asking you to accept it.

Mr. McKinley: That's what we're going to be doing. If we take a vote to accept this, we know it's illegal.

Mr. Riddle: You don't know it's illegal. Like I told you there were three hundred absentees...

President Roy: I know it is.

Mr. Riddle: It is illegal Kirby, they brought that up in the suit against me, three hundred people didn't put their ward and precinct.

President Roy: The law says...

Mr. Riddle: Okay, are you a Judge?

President Roy: I'm just reading the law. Its common sense.

Mr. Riddle: He has the right to sue.

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President Roy: Right. We... I don't want to say it.

Juror Clyde Benson: We have a right to vote too.

Mr. Riddle: You have a right to vote the way you want to vote. What I'm telling you is, you don't have discretion.

President Roy: Charlie who do you represent?

Mr. Riddle: I don't represent anybody.

President Roy: You represent us. You're siding with the other side because I know it you and I talked about it.

Mr. Riddle: I told you, yes, I like it, but that doesn't mean I'm not going to represent you. And let me tell you something...

President Roy: I just think we're getting poor representation. I hate to say it, because I love you to death.

Mr. Riddle: You have a right to file suit.

Mr. Benson: And I have a right to vote the way I want, right?

Mr. Riddle: Um, If you have..

Mr. Benson: I'm an official and I have the right to vote how I want, right?

Mr. Riddle: You can vote, yes.

Mr. McKinley Keller: That's [...]

Mr. Riddle: You can vote. What I am telling you is, once a petition is certified, the Police Jury doesn't have discretion at that point. Your discretion is to make sure the resolution you pass follows what the lawyer is proposing. If he gives you a resolution and it's proper...

President Roy: So if we were going to bring up a motion to reject or accept Home Ruel Charter Petition

Mr. Riddle: You can't do it.

Mr. Holmes: Yes, you can. The law you have in your hand is what you go by. If you don't go that, you will be sued.

Mr. Riddle: There will be a lawsuit.

Mr. Benson: There will be a lawsuit either way.

Mr. Holmes: So I advise you not to go with it.

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Mr. Bordelon: I thought we weren't deciding on this until June.

Mr. Roy: This is to place it on the ballot, we have until June.

Mr. Riddle: Wait until you hear from the attorney who is handling the resolution.

Mr. Roy: They aren't going to tell us anything about this.

Mr. Earles: What are you talking about get it on before June? To get it for the fall Kirby?

Mr. Riddle: All I'm saying is the Police Jury doesn't overturn a certified petition.

Mr. Glenn McKinley: It should have never been certified. If the law was followed this wouldn't have happened.

Mr. Bordelon: Can we table this until next month?

Mr. Riddle: I'm agreeing with you.

Mr. Glenn McKinley: Well, if you're agreeing with us...

Mr. Riddle: I understand.

Mr. Glenn McKinley: You're asking us to do something illegal.

Mr. Riddle: I am telling you the Police Jury has discretion to decide if the petition is illegal. He has a right to file a suit. He may win. If the Judge decides following this is not correct, then the certification is overturned. Okay. How is that not representing you?

Francis Keller: Charles, can I ask a question?

Mr. Riddle: Sure.

Francis Keller: If it was done and Mrs. Gloria certified it illegally, let's say she certified it, and the courts says it's wrong. You're asking them to vote on something and they find out it was wrong, illegal. They would be actually voting on something illegal.

Mr. Riddle: I'm answering your question. I'm asking them not to vote until they get a resolution from the attorney who handles their elections.

Francis Keller: Okay.

Mr. Riddle: If there's any objection to the certification process Mr. Holmes or any citizen has the right to sue.

President Roy: Just to let everyone know there are more things we are researching.

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Mr. Riddle: I have it.

President Roy: No, you don't have it yet. You know about one Secretary of State being at the bottom of the Petition that is also illegal.

Mr. Riddle: Of yeah, I know about that, and that may enough to challenge it.

Mr. Benson: The thing is, were going to be sued by either party.

Mr. Wiley: It's already certified, you can't vote for or against it. My thing, I thought it was done correctly. I'm disappointed in that.

Mr. Riddle: I understand what you're saying.

President Roy: Alright, I think there's a motion on the floor.

Mr. Wiley: What is the motion for?

On motion by Bobby Bordelon, seconded by McKinley Keller to table Home Rule Charter petition. On vote the motion carried.

On motion by Glenn McKinley, seconded by Mark Borrel approve Xerox for Judges Office \$303.00. On vote, the motion carried.

On motion by Bobby Bordelon, seconded by Jacob Coco, to advertise for Round 8 projects funded by Road District No. 2. On vote, the motion carried.

On motion by Darrell Wiley, seconded by Mark Borrel, to transfer \$4,000 to the Criminal Court Fund. On vote, the motion carried.

On motion by Darrell Wiley, seconded by Mark Borrel, to adopt a resolution supporting to continuous negotiations with the state to obtain funding for the Youth Complex Center. On vote, the motion carried.

On motion by Clyde Benson, seconded by Bobby Bordelon, to adopt a resolution of acceptance for Curry Moreau/Dewey Bernard. On vote, the motion carried.

On motion by Jacob Coco, seconded by McKinley Keller, to adopt a resolution of completion for Phase V Road Projects. On vote, the motion carried.

On motion by John Earles, seconded by Jacob Coco authorizing the President to sign the Audit Engagement Letter On vote, the motion carried.

On motion by Glenn McKinley, seconded by Mark Borrel, to reappoint Wilbert Carmouche to the Atchafalaya Trace Commission. On vote, the motion carried.

Item # 21 Mass Gathering- Mr. Francis Keller approached the podium to discuss. He explained to the Jury he notified local authorities of the upcoming event. There were no arrests made, and the participants brought much needed revenue to the City of Bunkie. A heated discussion ensued.

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President Roy formed a committee to review the parishes current Ordinance to make necessary modifications for futures events throughout the parish.

On motion by Glenn McKinley, seconded by John Earles, approving Joseph Frank to attend the LEMC Conference in Lake Charles. On vote, the motion carried.

On motion by Mark Borrel, seconded by Darrell Wiley, granting authority to the Secretary-Treasurer to pay all bills and waive a reading of the whole. On vote, the motion carried.

There being no further business, on motion by Clyde Benson, seconded by John Earles, the meeting adjourned.

s/Kirby Roy  
President

s/Jamey M.Wiley  
Secretary-Treasurer

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