

BOSSIER PARISH POLICE JURY
POLICY AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES

Mr. Doug Rimmer, Chairman
March 6, 2024

The Policy and Procedures Committee of the Bossier Parish Police Jury met on this 6th day of March, 2024, at 11:00 a.m., in the Police Jury Conference Room, Bossier Parish Courthouse, Benton, Louisiana. Mr. Doug Rimmer, Chairman, called the meeting to order, with the following members present:

Mr. Doug Rimmer, Chairman, Mr. Bob Brotherton, Mr. Glenn Benton, Mr. Jimmy Cochran, Mr. Julian Darby, Ms. Pam Glorioso, Mr. John Ed Jordan, Ms. Julianna Parks, Mr. Philip Rodgers, Mr. Tom Salzer, and Mr. Keith Sutton

Others present for the meeting:

Lieutenant Corky Bridges,
Ms. Ashley Ezell,
Ms. Stacie Fernandez,
Mr. Jim Firth,
Mr. Butch Ford,
Ms. Julie Gill,
Ms. Monica Grappe,
Mr. Eric Hudson,
Mr. Patrick Jackson,
Mr. Heath Lyles,
Mr. Brian Loftin,
Captain Gary Paddy,
Ms. Megan Ramos,
Ms. Lisa Wilson.

Mr. Doug Rimmer, Chairman, called the meeting to order. Mr. Butch Ford, Parish Administrator, provided a copy of the police jury's current policy on employee sick leave. He stated the current policy provides that an employee may request through his/her supervisor, to the Parish Administrator, 10 additional sick days in the event of an extended illness or hospital stay if the employee has used all available sick/vacation time. Mr. Ford stated that occasionally he receives an employee's request for the 10 additional sick days that does not meet the necessary criteria. Committee members discussed this policy, as well as the availability of both short-term and long-term disability insurance offered to full-time employees, FMLA availability once employees reach one year of service, and it was pointed out that the parish does not have a leave without pay policy.

Mr. Patrick Jackson, Parish Attorney, stated that he believes a leave without pay policy is a dangerous policy because it can lead to people taking time off without pay once they have exhausted all their leave. He further stated that supervisors cannot ask employees why they are taking their sick time. It was noted that the police jury does have a policy in place which requires an employee to provide a doctor's note after a certain amount of time is missed. Mr. Jackson added

that in the past, certain employees have used all their time by taking off Fridays and Mondays for recreational use, and then requested to take additional time off without pay. He stated that this is why the police jury currently does not have a policy for leave without pay. Mr. Ford stated that action by the jury is required in order to remove the current policy provision which allows an employee to request 10 additional sick days if all available sick/vacation time is used up.

There was discussion of the police jury's current policy on employee vacation benefits. Mr. Ford advised that several years ago, the parish had an independent salary study done which compared Bossier to several other parishes. He stated that the results of the study indicated that the police jury's current vacation policy is lower than those of our regional peers. He further stated when he received the report, some jurors reviewed it and believed we should look at ways to improve our vacation time.

Mr. Salzer stated that in his opinion, increasing the current employee vacation benefits should be considered if the police jury wants to remain competitive in hiring talented employees. There was discussion of increasing the vacation accrual from five to ten days the first year of service, and once the employee is vested at seven years, granting fifteen vacation days, with the potential to increase the number of days again at fifteen or twenty years of service.

Mr. Jackson asked Mr. Ford what the current policy is for maximum rollover for vacation hours. Mr. Ford stated that employees are allowed to rollover all unused vacation and sick time each year. He added that an employee can also credit unused sick time towards years of service in the retirement system. Mr. Ford stated that vacation time does not count towards retirement in the same way, adding that if an employee leaves or retires with vacation time, the parish will pay the employee for their unused time.

Mr. Jackson suggested that if the jury is considering increasing vacation time, then the rollover vacation policy will need to be adjusted as well. He stated that this will prevent employees from abusing the rollover policy.

Ms. Stacie Fernandez, Parish Treasurer, stated that the auditors calculate the rollover vacation policy every year, and the police jury only has one employee who is at the maximum number of days. Mr. Ford stated that he will get some additional reports and projections for the Policy and Procedures Committee to review at the next meeting.

Mr. Rimmer called for discussion of Louisiana Legislative Act 393 of 2023. Mr. Ford

stated that this has been under discussion internally and he has asked Mr. Heath Lyles, Operations Coordinator, to be here today to discuss the options. Mr. Ford stated that he is in the process of scheduling meetings with the Metropolitan Planning Commission offices in Bossier Parish to discuss their status of compliance, as they should hear public questions and comments for those types of cases. Mr. Ford stated that he will keep the committee advised as to any on-going meetings, and will extend invitations to some of those meetings.

There was discussion of proposed technology upgrades in the police jury meeting room. Mr. Lyles presented a power-point presentation on the proposed new technology, software and voting system being considered for the meeting room. He stated that these upgrades will allow the parish to have more options, and will improve audio in both recordings and live-stream capabilities.

Mr. Lyles advised that he has been working on a way to disseminate meeting information to the jurors electronically. Mr. Jackson, Parish Attorney, stated that if jurors are provided electronic devices for use at home, those devices will become a matter of public record. He further stated that in the instance of a public records request, those devices could also become responsive so data on each device must be preserved. Mr. Jackson stated it is his recommendation that jurors use their own personal devices.

There was discussion of the need for larger screens, and the possibility of voting via a new touch screen system and whether the results will be seen on live stream. Mr. Lyles advised that the up-front cost for the voting system is \$6,250.00, which includes training and set-up, and a cost of \$3,500.00 per year thereafter. He stated that a demo has been set up with the Caddo Parish Commission, who currently uses this system, and invited jurors to join the staff at their office on Friday, March 8, 2024, at 10:30 a.m. Mr. Ford stated that once the staff has had an opportunity to view the new system to ensure that it is functional for the parish, the staff will bring information back to the committee to discuss any unbudgeted additional costs. Mr. Jim Firth stated that today's presentation included several scenarios of functions, and during actual implementation, things will change to improve functionality for jurors.

Mr. Ford advised that Lieutenant Corky Bridges and Captain Gary Paddy are in attendance today to discuss some issues that have arisen recently with the courthouse. Lieutenant Bridges presented photographs of the 2nd and 3rd floors of the Bossier Parish Courthouse where visitors are

sitting and laying on the floor outside courtrooms and requested that the police jury consider providing seating in these areas of the building. Mr. Ford and Mr. Firth stated that they will research the original plans for the courthouse renovation and schedule a meeting with the Fire Marshal to discuss the potential of adding seating.

Lieutenant Bridges presented information concerning the need for gun boxes to be installed in strategic places so deputies can store their weapons when in areas they should not be armed, according to their policies. Mr. Heath Lyles said he is aware of this request, and his initial research shows the cost will likely be less than \$5,000.00.

Captain Paddy presented information about the technology upgrades for the front entrance scanners. The jurors discussed options for upgrades and Mr. Ford advised that he is working to get some cost estimates together to bring back to the appropriate committee.

This concluded the meeting of the Policy and Procedures Committee Meeting. The meeting was adjourned by the Chairman at 12:24 p.m.

MEGAN C. RAMOS
INTERIM PARISH SECRETARY

DOUG RIMMER, CHAIRMAN
BOSSIER PARISH POLICE JURY