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, Jenny Falls, Twyla Lemoine, Jimmy Landry, Jonathan Gaspard-Assistant District Attorney, Jen Piazza- Legislative Aide, Ronald Coco, Amy Guidry, Teryl St. Romain, Rev. Allen Holmes, Anthony Desselle, Micah White, Johnny Rogers, Guidry Guidry , Dr. Curtis Lewis, Rev. Guillory, and Dr. Holcombe

Absent were: None

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance by McKinley Keller, followed by a prayer led by Rev. Guillory

Roll call by Secretary-Treasurer.

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

On motion by Glenn McKinley, seconded by Darrell Wiley, to accept the minutes of the Tourist Commission Meeting held March 27, 2023, as presented. On vote, the motion carried.

On motion by Clyde Benson, seconded by Glenn McKinley, to submit a compliant with State Board of Elections

Jurors Benson “I bring the following information to your attention regarding the legitimacy of the certification of the petition submitted by the Registrar of Voters, Mrs. Moreau. The petition has guidelines to be fulfilled by the Registrar of Voters within 90 days after the first signature was affixed. This was not verified. The Registrar of Voters shall have the petition published in the official journal. Is there a record of that being done. The wards/precents were not on the petition, that it is title 18, Louisiana Election Code La. R.S. 18:3 for over 2,500 signatures. The petition was left at various establishments for signing. Did the Registrar of Voters have knowledge this had taken place. Additionally, the Avoyelles Coalition Task request to submit a certified letter with return receipt from the Registrar, Mrs. Moreau, answering ten questions. The letter was dated and sent March 30, 2023, with a return request of April 10, 2023, specifically the question were, and I’m not going to read all ten, I will read a few.

* In a Police Jury Meeting on March 7, 2023, Juror, Mr. Wiley, asked you “So all the information requested by a so-called petition was not followed, to which you responded, according to the Weekly News
* Were the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, as stated on the Petition told that the ward/precinct section was not to filled out by persons signing the petition even though it is stated in La. R.S. 18:3. Of the ten plus percent signatures verified, legitimate by your office the petitioners name appeared on the registrars roll for qualifying voters.
* Were there any forms to verify the witness date of signing the petition on the same date signed on a different date, which would not be true of having an actual witness of the petition signer.
* Were there any names of witnesses who pre-signed the petition form where on the petition where no name of the voter or the voter’s information was shown, which was in violation of the procedure to have the petition certified.

I want to make a response to Mr. Riddle relative to the petition what he told us at the meeting, The District Attorney stated that the Police Jury, as a group, had no discretion on how to handle the petition, and does not have the right to determine if it it’s legal or not. He said “what I’m telling you is, once the petition is certified, the Police Jury does not have discretion at that point, noting there was no action the Jury could legally take. Mr. Riddle told us, as a Jury what we could not do, but he did not tell us what we can do. A Police Jury does have the right to contest the legality of a Registrar of Voters certification as per Louisiana Election Supervisor guideline title 31 states conditions of the removal of the Registrar of Voters for non-compliance which the manual if such warrants. A proceeding for the removal shall be submitted to the State Board of Election Supervisors upon receipt of a resolution from a parish governing authority which shall include a favorable adoption of at least two thirds of the membership for the parish governing authority, which would be six votes. Based on the omission of the Registrar of Voters according to the question by Juror Darrel Wiley who asked, “So all the information requested by this so-called petition was not followed” to which she responded, “that is correct”. Additionally, with no response given the concerned citizens of the Avoyelles Coalition Task Force I make a motion that the Avoyelles Parish Police Jury will submit a resolution, a complaint, to be filed with the Chairman of the State Board of Election Supervisor to review and determine the legitimacy of the certification of the Home Rule Charter Petition conducted by the Avoyelles Parish Registrar of Voters. That is my motion.

Mr. Roy: You’re making a motion?

Mr. Benson: Yes.

Mr. Glenn McKinley: I second the motion.

Mr. Roy: Alright, we have a second.

Mr. Benson: That the Jury submits a resolution, and that’s the motion. To be filed with the Chairman of State Board Election Supervisor to determine whether the certification was legit.

Mr. Bordelon: Can I ask what our attorney says about this.

Mr. Gaspard: Well, from what I understood from what you were reading, Mr. Benson, the particular statute you talked about was a resolution by the police jury for the removal of the Registrar of Voters, not necessary for that particular state body to review the certification she made. Now, if you all want to pass that resolution and ask the state commission to review it, that’s fine, that doesn’t hurt anything. If they don’t have legal authority to, they will tell us. If you all want to pass that resolution, I don’t see any problems with that, all they can say is no.

Mr. Borrel: This stuff that’s going to the Attorney General and all that.

Mr. Gaspard: What stuff?

Mr. Borrel: All of this Home Rule Charter. We are supposed to get a letter from an attorney.

Mr. Gaspard: Yes, but that is to review the process, not the certification.

Mr. Bordelon: I can’t vote yes to something you’re not agreeing to.

Mr. Gaspard: Not necessarily. This is the certification process. Two totally separate issues.

Mr. Earles: If we approve it, let them review it.

Mr. Benson: That’s all I’m asking.

Mr. McKinley Keller: That’s all he’s asking.

Mr. Benson: The Board of Elections to look at all this and see if the certification was legit.

Mr. Roy: So, this will be sent by our Secretary-Treasurer?

Mr. Benson: Yes.

Mr. Roy: No lawyer involved?

Mr. Earles: Sent to who, the Attorney General?

Mr. Roy: The Board of Elections. If they come back and say it’s okay.

Mr. Gaspard: Let me stop you there. Going back to what we talked about at the last meeting, there’s only two people who can determine if it was done legally or not, that is either Billy Bennett or Kerry Spruill. If the goal is to challenge the certification, the proper procedure is for any registered voter to file a petition with the court challenging it. I understand what everyone is saying with the failure to comply with the statutes, but we can read that until we’re blue in the face. Until somebody upstairs says that it was not done properly, It doesn’t count.

Mr. Bordelon: Someone needs to make the motion; I can’t vote for it.

Mr. Roy: What’s the process of doing that, we have to have a lawyer?

Mr. Gaspard: No, any registered voter. You as a registered voter, not as the president of the police jury, any registered vote has the right to file a petition in the district court, upstairs challenging the certification of that petition. Not as a juror, as a citizen. Any citizen can do it.

Mr. Benson: We as a Police Jury has a right to file this, correct?

Mr. Gaspard: When you say this, you’re talking about the resolution?

Mr. Benson: Yes, the resolution. That I just…

Mr. Gaspard: Sure, I’m not saying the board is going to accept it, they can refuse to read it, but it doesn’t hurt to ask. From what I heard, what you read, was to remove the Registrar of Voter, not to challenge the petition certification.

Mr. Bordelon: Somebody will file a lawsuit.

Mr. Gaspard. The resolution if I heard correctly is to ask the board of election to review her certification, not her being in office. All they can do is say, believe me, they will have their lawyers review and see if it’s proper under the law.

Mr.Earles: When does it go upstairs?

Mr. Bordelon: When someone files a suit. So, it will go upstairs. I just don’t understand the resolution. It’s mind boggling. I, I just can’t go through with that. The wording isn’t correct, one aspect of the wording asks for the removal, the other wording asks for review.

Mr. Earles: Table this until we find out more.

Mr. Bordelon: He made a motion.

Mr. Roy: He made a motion, and there is a second. You can uh, amend to table it, uh…

Mr. Benson: Uh, the lawyer said we not doing nothing. How is somebody going to sue us.

Mr. Bordelon: I didn’t say someone was going to sue us, sir. Someone is going to file a suit just like he said some…some individual citizen, registered voter is going to file suit. Mr. Holmes stated in one meeting he would. So, we know it will happen. It will be decided upstairs. This resolution I’m just hearing about, I can’t uh…accept it. That’s my vote.

Mr. Roy: We have a motion, and we have a second.

Mr. Bordelon: We have to vote.

Mr. Roy: We can vote on it, see where you all want to go with it. The question has been called.

Mr. Borrel: I’m just hearing this for the first time.

Mr. Jimmy Landry: Kirby, can you take questions?

Mr. Roy: Yep.

Mr. Landry: My question is this, in the question of certification is one thing, but I go back and kind of understood where certification…and uh…the question of a resolution was two separate items. The question whether or not the certification was legal was on issue, the fact that she certified it and you had to move with the resolution once it was certified. So, can you say something to that?

Mr. Gaspard: Two sperate issues. Number one, whether the certification was proper or not, will be decided upstairs. The resolution as I understand, is a resolution from the police Jury asking the state board of elections to review if the certification was proper. That’s what I understood. Even if the state board says it was not proper, it still has to be decided upstairs. That’s…that’s the linchpin of everything.

Mr. Roy: If it gets upstairs. Somebody has to file a suit.

Mr. Gaspard: Somebody has to file a suit.

Mr. Benson: We as a jury, we as jury, if I am correct, can vote to send this to the board of elections, and have them look at it.

Mr. Gaspard: Yes.

Mr. Benson: That’s all I’m asking.

Mr. McKinley: That’s all we’re asking.

Mr. Earles: What’s wrong with that?

Mr. Gaspard: Understand, if the board comes back and says it was not certified properly, that doesn’t get you where you need to be.

Mr. Benson: That’s right. They can even come back and say were aren’t even going to look at it.

Mr. Gaspard: Correct.

Mr. Benson: We as a jury, have a right to…

Mr. Gaspard: Yes, the answer is yes.

Mr. Benson: That’s all I’m asking. Just look at it.

Mr. Gaspard: You’re correct.

Mr. Bordelon: But what I’m asking because I don’t have time to read it. I’m just hearing about this resolution. I also hear you say, you heard a line in his resolution… look, I don’t mind anyone looking at it, I don’t mind that. I just want to make sure the resolution he’s asking us to pass, you said you heard one quote in there that come from another area.

Mr. Gaspard: I heard, and correct me if I’m wrong, you’re reading from a particular statute.

Mr. Benson: Right.

Mr. Gaspard: That made reference to the procedure of the removal of the Registrar. Now, the resolution that I heard was simply asking the board to review the certification process.

Mr. Benson: And the only way I could get to the resolution was through that part of the law. You know. I am not asking to have anybody removed from their job, I’m asking to have this looked at.

Member of the audience speaking Mrs. Twyla Lemoine: But are you all going to reference the statute to remove from office in the resolution you submit?

Mr. Gaspard: If that is the case, believe me, they will let you know.

Mr. Roy: Ah, Reverend.

Member of the audience speaking to Reverend Guillory: I just wanted to state that some of this information referenced to Title 31 comes from. I think we’ve dissected a lot of stuff that doesn’t need to be dissected.

It is my interpretation in looking at getting the supervisor to review the petition that it comes through that particular statement that says to file a complaint against, for the removal of you Registrar of Voters. The intent is not necessary to remove her, but in order to have the complaint looked at which is the responsibility of the Registrar who did that, that is what it says. Then that is the way to go through it. That’s how it reads. Now, the other thing is if the Police Jury does not want to do it, just let it go through to see if the certification was correct. The intent is not to get rid of the Registrar. That was made clear, but the way it was written, you have to go through that particular statement that says to remove the Registrar, and included in there is the idea that something went wrong with the certification. The other idea is, and I’m going to sit down after this, is if the Police Jury does not want to do it, that is all we are asking for. There’s another statement in 31, it has already been said by the attorney, individual can file a complaint, same type of complaint with the Election Supervisor. I have not read in there, Mr. Attorney, where we have to go through a District Court, it just says number B.

Mr. Gaspard: Not to interrupt you, but everyone has their interpretation of the law. The one who wears the black robe, that’s who counts. You can send the resolution Mr. Benson. If it’s up to you all, you lose absolutely nothing.

Mr. Benson: It has nothing to do with the removal of our Registrar.

Mr. Earles: You clear on that, Jonathan? It’s alright?

Mr. Gaspard: Yea, it hurts nothing. All they can do is tell you no.

Mr. Earles: Let’s vote on it.

Mr. Roy: Call for a vote.

Vote as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yea | Clyde Benson, Glenn McKinley, McKinley Keller, Mark Borrel, Darrell Wiley, and John Earles |
| Nay | Bobby Bordelon & Jacob Coco |
| Absent | None |
| Abstain | None |

The motion to submit a formal request to the State Board of Election Supervisors to review the legitimacy of the certification by the Registrar of the Home Rule Charter Petition was carried.

Mrs. Lemoine: You didn’t let me talk Kirby. I’m disappointed. Jonathan, I have a question.

Mr. Roy: No. It’s over.

Mr. Borrel: Yea, it’s over.

Mr. Lemoine: I had my name on the list.

Mr. Roy: But this has been voted on.

Mr. Lemoine: Okay… Okay.

Mr. Roy: I didn’t let you talk? You didn’t talk? I’m sorry.

Mr. Earles: Yea, she said something.

Mr. Roy: It’s been voted on, it’s time to move on. My apologies.

On motion by Darrell Wiley, seconded by Mark Borrel, to accept a Proclamation recognizing the LSU Women’s basketball team.

PROCLAMATION

ON THE OCCASION TO HONOR AND RECOGNIZE THE LSU WOMEN’S BASKETBALL TEAM

WHEREAS, the Avoyelles Parish Police Jury wishes to honor and recognize LSU women’s basketball team; and

WHEREAS, the team led by Head Coach Kim Mulkey won the first NCAA Championship in LSU history by defeating Iowa 102 to 85; and

WHEREAS, the individual efforts and performances, and the courage and heart displayed by this dynamic, talented Tiger team through the season are certainly a tribute to the hard work and dedication of these players; and

WHEREAS, the talents and determination of every player have culminated in a successful, historic season for the Lady Tigers; and

WHEREAS, proving true the old adage that “big things come in small packages” showcasing that her height does not hamper her skills, Coach Kim Mulkey helped revive a renewed spirit of hope and excitement, and instilled a sense of great pride in the citizens of the state; and

NOW THREFORE, the Avoyelles Parish Police Jury would like to offer special recognition to the Louisiana State University women’s basketball team and coaching staff for winning the 2023 NCAA women’s national championship.

On vote, the proclamation accepted and will be forwarded to Louisiana State University.

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

On motion by Bobby Bordelon, seconded by Clyde Benson, upon recommendation by the Industrial Park Board, the Police Jury authorizes Y Not Stop to proceed with its processing center. On vote, the motion carried.

Jurors Jacob Coco advised the Jury he would like to take no action on the Simmesport Hub Health Center.

Persons to address the Board:

* Dr Curtis Lewis- Office of Public Health.

I am here to answer any question you may have regarding the possibility of setting up a satellite public health site in Simmesport. What’s unique about this is we are using a private facility, so we have to address it a little bit differently. That is why I have outlined the steps in the information handout last week.

Mr. Roy: Jonathan, do you see any issues with the private facility, and we are going to update it and have a lease on it.

Mr. Borrel: Funding, funding.

Mr. Gaspard: It would require some type of long-term lease with some very specific language. Using public funds on private property is leased in certain, limited circumstances, but when there’s a lease, I definitely need to look at it.

Dr. Lewis: Real quick, what we’re doing is establishing an actual satellite site. The first step is for the board to review it and approve it as a temporary until we can get our certifications and updates. The documents handed out by Mrs. Liz Leger last week is a line by line exactly what needs to be done.

Mr. Bordelon: We can’t go and spend $80,000 - $100,000 to do renovations and a certain amount every month for you know… and how’s the contract. Can you kick us out in five months?

Dr. Lewis: First I need you all to name it as a temporary site before we can even go in there and start looking at it.

Mr. Bordelon: I’m not naming a site until I know how much it will cost.

Dr. Lewis: Well, we can’t do anything if it’s not…we can’t get our Architect in there.

Mr. Roy: Dr. Lewis can you have for the next Committee Meeting numbers?

Dr Lewis: We can’t, until we, uh. The first is step is to say yes, this will be a temporary site, so we can get out folks in there because if you say no, there no point in getting the Jury…

Mr. Coco: The Jury has to name it as a temporary satellite.

Dr. Lewis: Yes, with conditions saying, until it’s approved by WIC, public health, laboratory, until you all agree with funding. Without that, there is no point in going in there because you all could easily say no, that’s not it.

Mr. Coco: So, no obligation?

Dr Lewis: Yea, this is going to be a potential satellite building, then we go in and start looking, setting up inspections and surveyors.

Mr. Coco: Dr. Holcombe, Kirby, my suggestion to the jury is that we meet again, Dr Holcombe, Kirby, Curtis, Jarrod and the jury and uh, and let’s see all the cost. Then the jury will know up front and they can see preliminary cost.

Dr. Lewis: It’s like temporary, hey, this is…

Mr. Coco: Yea, we can do that in May.

Mr. Roy: Yes, there will be a yearly cost. That was supposed to be presented Thursday and I don’t know what happened.

Dr. Lewis: Well, well, we can’t do anything until you all say…

Mr. Earles; We can’t pass that if we don’t know what the cost will be.

Dr. Lewis: It’s simple if it meets your budgetary cost, the WIC certification, the Lab certification. There’s a lot of steps, but if it’s not going to be named a temporary site, we can’t take any steps.

Mr. Roy: But Dr. Lewis all of this just comes up tonight. I mean this is the first time I hear any of this, that you want a resolution from us.

Dr. Lewis: Oh, no, tonight is just answering any questions.

Mr. Roy: Thursday we didn’t have any numbers and Bobby jumped, and I’m glad he did because we have no numbers.

Dr. Lewis: I wasn’t here Thursday, that was just a discussion. This is probably two years out.

Mr. Roy: Jacob wants to have a committee. Jacob, will you form that Committee? A meeting and we will get all of this together.

Dr. Lewis: First, everybody…

Mr. Roy: I think we need to be better prepared for the next meeting.

Mr. Bordelon: They are going to take a wing of the nursing home in Simmesport. We’re going to remodel it, the Health Unit will remodel it, and there’s a price in there. We will defiantly need our attorney involved.

Mr. Borrel: It’s a whole wing, or a room?

Dr. Lewis: It’s only four rooms. The first step is to get everyone out there to look at it. I don’t think anyone has seen the section.

Mr. Earles: Three minutes are up.

Mr. Borrel: Dr. Holcombe, years ago, we talked about putting a…how much was that?

Dr. Holcombe: Ok, you know, start my timer. So, this is an original proposal to actually out a Healthy Unit in Simmesport. Your parish is 52nd out of 64 parishes unhealthy, so it’s not all that great. When you look at social vulnerability, it turns out Simmesport has a .97 which is the highest in the state. So, the idea of putting a whole Health Unit was exorbitantly expensive. Mr. Lacour has a wing of his nursing home that would be very suitable to establish a health hub where people could actually walk to get WIC services. It’s really

a nice thing to do, although it will cost some money, the outlay will be minuscule compared to establishing an entire health unit. So, you will be paying very little money for a big benefit.

Mr. Bordelon: Dr. Holcombe, you know the 3-mil property tax come up for renewal next year, right now we have four million six hundred eighty thousand dollars in the Health Unit Fund. A lot of people, you know I hear in the public talk about how we are over taxed “Why my roads isn’t fixed when I pay taxes” what they don’t realize, most of their tax money goes to the library and health unit, more than it does to roads, with four million six hundred thousand in the bank makes me and some other people sit back and say maybe we are overtaxed on it. What is this tax don’t pass next year? We put all this money into this new unit, this hub out here. There would be no way to operate it, and possibly have to close Bunkie. Out of 64 parishes we are one of the only ones with two areas, you know.

Dr. Holcombe: Yea, that was under Senator Hines. Anyway, that happens with a lot of parishes you take away money and you cannot believe what happens. It is the people’s money, and you can decide what you do with it. Some take one-third, or one-half and put it into prison care. So, there is a lot of latitude there, the millage is for public health.

Mr. Benson: I’ve been to a couple of meetings with you all. We are not talking about a lot of money. We are looking at running this place and spending sixty thousand dollars in a two-year period. That’s the kind of money we’re talking about.

Mr. Earles: That’s what we need to know.

Dr. Holcombe: Right. The reason you didn’t have that last time was because we didn’t have a construction estimate.

Mr. Benson: That’s the whole hang up right now. How much, how much will construction cost? If we knew we would have a figure down. It’s not that much of a constriction job.

Mr. Bordelon: Not nearly what it was four years ago.

Mr. Benson: You’re talking about a construction job of maybe thirty thousand dollars, with that it may cost another thirty to run this place for two years.

Mr. Earles; When you talk about construction of a health unit you have all kinds of stipulations, like Bunkie this has to be so big, that has to be so big.

Mr. Bordelon: I’m concerned with what our attorney said about what the contract will have to read. We will be using public money in a private facility.

Mr. Gaspard: Absolutely.

Mr. Bordelon: that’s a big, big thing.

Mr. Benson: I don’t think it will be a private facility. We will have a lease. If we have a lease, it’s not private, right?

Mr. Gaspard: There is absolutely no way you could take public money and put it into a private facility without some type of long-term agreement.

Dr. Lewis: That’s why it’s line by line, it’s temporary just agreeing to have a satellite site. We have to at least agree with these conditions we will make it permanent. Again, this is temporary so if you out a capo that renovations don’t go over twenty thousand, then that’s you all’s decision.

Mr. Bordelon: Jonathan, something I would like to look at in the paperwork when we get to the point of contract is defiantly if the tax does not renew next year that would default us for any type of rental agreement, so we aren’t stuck.

Dr. Lewis: We can put that in there.

Mr. Gaspard: That could hurt, or help, outing public money in a private facility. It’s difficult to take out what’s become part and parcel of the building, so it will be done very carefully.

Mr. Roy: Thank ya’ll.

On motion by Bobby Bordelon, seconded by Mark Borrel, to table the Cocoville Estate until additional information can be obtained. On vote, the matter is tabled.

On motion by Glenn McKinley, seconded by John Earles, to accept the resignation of Gloria Moreau, Registrar of Voters. On vote, the motion carried.

On vote, by McKinley Keller, seconded by Mark Borrel to advertise to accept applications to fill the Registrar of Voters position. The appointment will be made in accordance with La. R.S. 18:51 (C) (1) (a) after June 3, 2023. On vote:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yea | Glenn McKinley, McKinley Keller, Mark Borrel, Darrell Wiley, John Earles, Bobby Bordelon, and Jacob Coco |
| Nay | Clyde Benson |
| Absent | None |
| Abstain | None |

The motion carried.

On motion by Jacob Coco, seconded by Bobby Bordelon, to adopt a resolution to move Precinct 7-3 from the Simmesport Town Hall to the Simmesport Council on Aging. On vote, the motion carried.

On motion by John Earles, seconded by McKinley Keller, to adopt a resolution to assign polling locations for the precincts created under Redistricting Plan A. On vote,

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The motion carried.

On motion by Glenn McKinley, seconded by Mark Borrel, to appoint Howard Desselle, III to the Airport Authority Board for a period of five years. On vote, the motion carried.

On motion by Mark Borrel, seconded by Bobby Bordelon, 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 John Earles, seconded by Mark Borrel, the meeting adjourned.

s/Kirby Roy s/Jamey M.Wiley

President Secretary-Treasurer

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