

**ROAD COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
5:00 P.M.**

Present: John Watley, Glenn Hutto, Mike Jones and Nathan Futch. Absent: None. Also present was Jerry W. Taylor, Charles Sawyer, Lanny Parker, Derek Kennedy, Mark Preaus, Shane Abercrombie, Lane Rugg, T. J. Miller, Lynn Ramsey, Kennon Cobb, Michael Mahaffey and a host of spectators.

Mr. Watley called the meeting to order. Mr. Watley led the group in prayer.

**Motion Mr. Jones, seconded by Mr. Watley and declared adopted by unanimous roll call vote of the Committee to approve the agenda as written.**

**Motion Mr. Jones, seconded by Mr. Watley and declared adopted by unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

***Public Comments on Agenda Items***

Shane Abercrombie, 295 Highway 2, Sterlington, LA

Mr. Abercrombie thanked the committee for the open discussion. He has two issues with the ordinance. His first issue is with being re-routed and being held responsible for the road he is being re-routed on. He does not want to be held liable for being re-routed on a substandard road. His second issue is with the four (4) inch rut language. He does not think the four (4) inch rut language should apply to roads that are not normally traveled. He has no issue with the four (4) inch rut rule applying to roads where residences are located, mail carriers are delivering mail and school buses travel. Mr. Abercrombie states that if a road is open fifty-two (52) weeks out of the year then the four (4) inch rut rule should apply. ***Glenn Hutto enters the meeting.*** Mr. Abercrombie says he understands that the previous jurors have not done a very good job of managing the parish's money. He states that in 2016 the severance tax collected for Union Parish totaled \$680,438. He asks the committee are they willing to lose that much revenue if this ordinance is passed. He states that he will go to Lincoln or Claiborne Parish to haul timber instead of Union. He does not want to be responsible for a road that is already weakened.

Mark Preaus, 1805 Pace Brown Road, Marion, LA

Mr. Preaus states that he understood that the ordinance came about because the police jury wanted to know where the loggers were hauling. He has no issues with letting the road superintendent or his agent know where he will be hauling. He states that a permit system brings about certain liabilities on whomever that permit is issued to. He would rather this be called a location ticket where a simple phone call is required. The only roads that should come into question are those roads that can be traveled 52 weeks out of the year by domestic traffic – that means two wheel drive traffic. Mr. Preaus is a forrester and represents several land owners in Union Parish. The average land owner in Union Parish owns around 30 acres of timber. Mr. Preaus has several issues with the proposed ordinance.

- The Heavy Hauling Ordinance is singling out the logging industry and exempting other industries. The ordinance should apply to all industries.
- Page 1 Section I(e) states that entry and exit of vehicles to parish roads shall be at angles to minimize damage to parish roads or bridges. Sometimes that is not possible.
- Significant rain language. Mr. Preaus states that this should be on a road by road basis and who will determine what is significant.
- Four (4) inch rut language.
- Disturbance language regarding the right of ways.
- How is the road superintendent going to have enough time to field all these phone calls and check out these roads?
- What is Ordinance 708 and will this ordinance rescind the ordinance that was passed in the 1990's?

Thomas J. Miller, 1042 Main Street, Marion, LA

Mr. Miller states that he has been a logger for over fifty (50) years. There are multiple roads in Union Parish that need to be shut down. There are multiple roads in the parish that lead to nowhere and no residences are located on the roads. Union Parish should be run like a business. He states that he would like to be able to work when he needs to – even in the rain. Mr. Miller would like some leeway while he is trying to make a living. The jail time is extreme. He urges the jury to use a little common sense. He has no problem with a location ticket, but does not want a permit because of the liability issue. Mr. Miller states that he has been told by a juror that the drilling in this parish is over unless something changes. Mr. Miller said lets use some common sense and work together. Union Parish already pays more taxes than any other place. We are one of the highest in the nation. We ask you to be fair with us.

Lynn Ramsey, 167 Jerry Ramsey Road, Farmerville, LA

Mrs. Ramsey states that she is a land owner in Union Parish. She has sold a lot of tracts of timber in her life. She is afraid that the ordinance will keep the timber industry out of Union Parish. Mrs. Ramsey inquires as to whether cement trucks will have to be permitted. Mrs. Ramsey states she lives on a parish road and it is like an old timey wash tub. She has called numerous parish employees over the years – Karen Williams, Lane Rugg, Nathan Futch, Jerry Taylor and Paula Strickland with complaints. The road is in total disrepair. She states that 95% of the time her husband ends up fixing the road. She has asked for gravel for her road and she is always told there is never enough money. Mrs. Ramsey wants to know if there is no money for gravel then how is the parish going to pay someone to enforce the new ordinance.

Kennon Cobb, 281 Myrtle Drive, Farmerville, LA

Mrs. Cobb states that she has kids and she wants to see people come to Union Parish to live here. She states that our school system is in a mess and our taxes are high. Mrs. Cobb asks the committee who would want to come live in Union Parish. She asks the committee that if the ordinance passes, how is this going to affect my kids buying land here or buying a house. She does not understand why anyone would want to move here when we constantly push people out and cut jobs. The insurance for the loggers is going to go up. She states that the people of Union Parish are already a laughing stock and people already think we are a bunch of idiots up here. She urges the committee to stop proving them right. She states that if the jurors are the kind of people that they say they are ... nice Christian men, then they should act like that and not hold

grudges against someone because you got in an argument with them. Mrs. Cobb urges the jury to be fair and be the kind of people that you say you are.

After listening to the comments of the citizens and a brief discussion among committee members the following changes were made to proposed Ordinance 885:

**Motion Mr. Hutto, seconded by Mr. Jones to add the wording on page 1 Section 1 2(e) “when possible”. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Motion Mr. Jones, seconded by Mr. Hutto to add an Exception on page 2 Section II 1(a) “Exception: Roads that are not often traveled, does not have a residence located on them or are not a black top or clay gravel surface may be exempt from the four (4) inch rut violation.” Motion carried unanimously.**

At this time Mr. Taylor asks the chairman of the Road Committee if he can speak. The chairman grants permission to Mr. Taylor. Mr. Taylor states that he agrees with what Mr. Abercrombie is saying. If the jury permits a logger and the road superintendent re-routes him the logger should not be held responsible for normal wear and tear while using that road. Mr. Hutto also agrees that it should be under normal conditions.

Mr. Hutto states that a lot of the ordinance is common sense and safety. Mr. Abercrombie is worried about being shut down for twenty-four (24) hours after a rain. There is more discussion regarding mud on the road and roads being impassable. Mr. Hutto reiterates that most of this is common sense. He does not want any roads that are impassable and residents can't get home to their houses. Mr. Abercrombie states that he does not agree with the 24 hour rain language.

**Motion Mr. Hutto, seconded by Mr. Jones to add the following language on page 4 “When superintendent permits a logger and that logger is traveling the approved route designated by the superintendent then he is not responsible for the normal wear and tear of the road.” Motion carried unanimously.**

**Motion Mr. Hutto, second by Mr. Jones to recommend to the full jury to rescind Ordinance 881 and adopt Ordinance 885 with the new changes. Motion carried unanimously.**

**There being no further business to come before the committee, Mr. Watley declared the meeting adjourned upon motion by Mr. Hutto and duly seconded by Mr. Jones on this the 10<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2018.**

**John Watley, Chairman  
Paula Strickland, Secretary-Treasurer**