

SPECIAL MEETING UNION PARISH POLICE JURY

Farmerville, Louisiana
April 26th, 2019

The Union Parish Police Jury met this date in special session in the Police Jury meeting room, Courthouse Annex, Farmerville, Louisiana with the following present: Charles Sawyer, Jerry W. Taylor, Nathan Futch, Stan Smith, Mike Jones and John W. Watley. Also present was Tracy Houck, Assistant District Attorney. The President called the meeting to order and welcomed all visitors. Mr. Sawyer offered the invocation and Mr. Watley led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Taylor asked if anyone in the audience would like to register for public comment. At this time the public was given the opportunity to comment on any item shown on the agenda. Mr. Taylor thanked the jurors for coming on short notice, but thought the situation warranted a special meeting. Mr. Watley complimented the road department and the Road Superintendent for a job well done regarding a washout on Hideaway Lane.

Motion Mr. Jones, seconded by Mr. Watley and declared adopted by unanimous roll call vote of the Jury to approve the agenda with two additions:

- 7 – Discuss and take action, if necessary, regarding debris cleanup.**
- 8 – Homeland Security Update.**

A discussion was held concerning the emergency purchase of a backhoe. The current backhoe was purchased in 1992. The list price on the backhoe is \$136,215 and the jury can purchase the backhoe from state contract for the price of \$85,693.92. Doggett has a backhoe on hold in Baton Rouge and it can be delivered on Monday. We are currently leasing a backhoe, but an extra backhoe is still needed for the cleanup the parish is facing from the storm which hit Union Parish in the early hours of Thursday morning. **Motion Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Watley to authorize the emergency purchase of a 2019 backhoe on state contract from Doggett in the amount of \$85,693.92. Motion carried unanimously.** President Taylor thanked the jurors for the affirmative vote and stated that we can't expect our workers to work if they don't have the equipment to use.

A discussion was held concerning debris cleanup. President Taylor addressed the jurors concerning waiving the landfill fees to dispose of tree and vegetation debris from storm damage for Union Parish residents until May 15, 2019. **Motion Mr. Sawyer, seconded by Mr. Futch to waive the landfill fees for disposal of tree and vegetation debris from the storm damage for Union Parish residents until May 15, 2019. Motion carried unanimously.**

A discussion was held concerning contract labor to clean up the larger trees and the disposal of those trees. Mr. Rugg has obtained several quotes from contractors who have the equipment and labor to dispose of those larger trees. A quote has been obtained from Bradley Jones for \$210 an hour for contract labor. Mr. Rugg states that there are only three or four areas that have larger trees that will need contracting out. **Motion Mr.**


Jones, seconded by Mr. Sawyer to authorize an expenditure up to \$17,000 for contract clean up. Motion carried unanimously.

Greg Gossler, Director of Union Parish Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness, addressed the jurors concerning a storm update. Mr. Gossler asked that he be able to consult with the National Guard before any outside contracting services for debris removal be initiated. Mr. Gossler stated that he made a Declaration of Emergency in conjunction with Police Jury President Jerry Taylor on Thursday morning after careful consideration. Mr. Gossler states that declaring the emergency is his call and not the Police Jury President. The Declaration of Emergency was promptly filed with the Union Parish Clerk of Court's office. There is a real possibility that there could be a Federal Declaration of Emergency. If a federal declaration is made then the possibility for avenues of reimbursement will be much greater. If that happens Union Parish will join Lincoln Parish. Union Parish sustained a substantial amount of property and agricultural damage. Mr. Gossler states that he has made arrangements for an Individual Assistance Preliminary Damage Assessment Team from Baton Rouge to view Union Parish to assess the damage. The most important thing for department heads and other agencies to do is to track the man hours and equipment that are being utilized. Even volunteer hours can be kept up with and submitted for reimbursement. Union Parish may not see a penny of this money, but if we don't try then we won't receive anything. Any expenditure that is beyond the norm can be utilized. Mr. Gossler states that he has been able to secure an aerial surveillance using a state police helicopter to fly over the path of destruction. Senator Walsworth has been in contact with Mr. Gossler and President Taylor and he said that the governor is on board and will do everything in his power to push to have this declared a federal emergency. This storm has been a worldwide recognized storm. Mr. Gossler states that he appreciates the help he has been given by the different departments and also states that the people in Union Parish are very resilient and we will get through this.

President Taylor thanked Mr. Gossler for his work. President Taylor said that the Landfill will be open on Saturday for tree and debris removal. President Taylor also thanked Tracy Houck who is the new Assistant District Attorney representing the police jury.

Mr. Sawyer asked the jurors and Mr. Gossler if there was a storm shelter in Union Parish and if there was not one what could be done to implement one. Mr. Gossler said that the courthouse structure can be looked at for the availability of an emergency shelter. In the event of an emergency the maintenance supervisor would have to be contacted and then he would have to travel to the courthouse to unlock it. Mr. Gossler states that he will look into the feasibility of an immediate emergency shelter at the courthouse.

There being no further business to come before the Jury, the President declared the meeting adjourned upon motion by Mr. Sawyer, seconded by Mr. Watley on this the 26th day of April 2019.



PAULA STRICKLAND
Secretary/Treasurer



JERRY W. TAYLOR
President