

PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATCHITOCHEES PARISH COUNCIL
PARISH OF NATCHITOCHEES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN A SPECIAL MEETING HELD, MONDAY,
MAY 09, 2016
5:00 p.m.

The Natchitoches Parish Council met in regular and legal session in the Council Board Room of the Natchitoches Parish Courthouse, on Monday, May 9, 2016 for a special meeting of Natchitoches Parish Council meeting at five(5:00) o'clock p.m. and for the Natchitoches Parish Council Meeting.

The Parish of Natchitoches was then convened as the governing authority by Chairman Russell Rachal who stated that the Parish was ready for the transaction of business.

The invocation was given by Rev. Charles Cloud and the Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilman Russell Rachal.

After the roll call there were present Councilmen Russell Rachal and Rodney Bedgood, Doug de Graffernied, Chris Paige, and Councilwoman Patsy Ward-Hoover.

Absent: None.

Chairman Rachal then asked for visitors at this time. There were none.

Chairman Rachal stated the next item on the agenda was for Council to Consider "rolling forward" a number of ad valorem tax rates will be reduced as a result of increased property assessments in the Parish, unless they are rolled forward.

There were discussion about how much the Parish would get in the different funds if rolled forward, Mr. Nowlin, and Ms. Debbie Miley explained the amounts, and also there were handouts to show the 2016 Re-appraised Taxable Property Valuation, Current Millage, 2016 Current Amount, If rolled forward Millage Rate, Roll Forward Tax Amounts, and the Difference Per Year. The Council had a lengthy discussion, no one from the audience had anything to say on this matter.

On motion by Councilman Bedgood, duly seconded by Councilwoman Hoover, that the Natchitoches Parish Council, in special and legal session convened, does hereby approved to keep the millage rates the same and will not "roll forward".

On a roll call vote, the vote thereon was as follows:

Ayes:	Councilman Bedgood
Ayes:	Councilwoman Hoover
Ayes:	Councilman de Graffernied
Ayes:	Councilman Paige
Nayes:	Councilman Rachal

Motion Passed

Chairman Rachal stated the next item on the agenda was for Council to consider issuing public notice that the Parish will place a new road tax proposition on the ballot for consideration by the voters in the election to be held on November 8, 2016. At this time Parish President begin by stating how badly the roads were in the Parish. Rick Nowlin gave a report on a telephone poll that was taken on a Parish Road Tax proposition, the poll was from May 6-7 2016. According the telephone poll, when it came down to passing a property tax the City of Natchitoches Only said No by 68.2 percent, Parish Only said No by 74.0 percent, Parish Wide said no by 70.6 percent, Ward 1 Outside City said no by 71.4 percent and Ward 2,3,4 said No by 75.5 percent. so no one was in favor to support a property tax. The second option was for a Sales Tax. City of Natchitoches only: 56.6 in favor of a tax, and 43.4 was against the tax. Parish Only: 47.4 Yes 52.7 No, Parish Wide:

52.8 Yes 47.2 No, Ward 1 Outside City: 47.3 Yes, 52.7 No. Wards 2,3,4
47.4 Yes and 52.6 No.

Councilman Chris Paige, asked a question about the towns which is already max out over the state tax, such towns as Campti, what will happen to them. Parish President Rick Nowlin, stated they will be excluded from this tax. Councilman Paige, also wanted to know if the Parish President has spoken with the Chamber of Commerce about this tax. Parish President stated he has talked with a number of people, but he don't know what actions they are going to take, he hope the Parish will be supported by the Chambers.

Councilman Bedgood stated he have spoken with people as he could that reside in his area to get an idea. He said he was going to be honest they say they would might be interested and would think about a tax, only if it's dedicated to District Road 40. This tax must be used only for roads, no salaries, no matching funds. Also the people wanted this put in a separate account on for District Road 40 and they must be kept aware of everything that is taken out of the fund. They must make the residents aware of the money and how its being spent.

Mr. Rick Nowlin, stated it must be written so it will go strictly for roads improvements and maintenance of the roads only. Mr. Nowlin, also mention if this passes they would have to hire some more workers because they would have to buy equipment and they would need people to work the equipment. It will not be use to benefit increase of salaries or benefits. Post it online how much money is coming in and where it's going. They would have to use this money for matching funds, because they do not have the money to cover the 25% the Parish is responsible for. If we can't pay then we'll be responsible for the whole 100 percent. This will be strictly for roads.

Councilman Bedgood, stated he has spoken with, "knowledgeable people" wanted to know if they can separate the funds; they would like to see the funds separate from the other funds so they can track what is being done with the money they do not want all the new tax money put in the Highway Department fund.

Parish President, stated he do feel that the new tax money needs to be in a separate account so it can be managed and people will know exactly what is being done with it. Parish President stated the Parish does not have the matching funds for the approve projects. So they will need this money to help road projects.

Chairman Rachal stated he has gotten some calls and people have told him, the City needs to be involved with this tax also the Parish should not try to do it on their own. They want it written up because they have a trust issue, if it comes up on the ballot and passes, have it written up so once the term is up from the previous Council, that the new ones comes in can't change anything. The people wants to be able to trust the Parish for now on with it.

Parish President stated this can happen by writing the proposition by Bond Council from Foley and Judell, the dedication is part of what goes on the ballot and you can't violate that and stay out of jail. Mr. Osburn will write the actual language to go on the ballot. Parish President Rick Nowlin stated he told Mr. Osburn this has be dedicated only towards roads and not anything else.

Councilwoman Hoover stated, she also talked with some people in her District and she was told it should not be present to go on the November 18 ballot at this time. The Parish needs a plan to present to the public and also what it will cost, the name of the roads that are being worked on and what upgrades will be done to those roads. She also wanted to know about, Will that plan include the municipalities in the work schedule in District 40?

Different ones spoke on things, Mr. Charles Cloud spoke on being on the Adhoc Advisory Committee , he thought it was a good thing until himself and Mr. Pleasant was traveling on road checking it and his window got shot out his truck. There is was one fair tax is a sales tax. The people needs to be educated on what is going to be done and what is going to be spent.

Councilwoman Hoover wanted to ask Mr. Cloud did he feel the sales tax needs to go forward to be on the November 8 ballot. Mr. Cloud answered by saying yes and no, yes the roads needs to be fixed but no the public needs to be informed about the tax. The public needs to be educated on this before you just put it on the ballot.

The Chairman is speaking on what is being said on Facebook by the people is the Council will be doing an injustice on deciding for them, they would like the opportunity to express themselves through voting. The Chairman personally say he will vote yes to bring it to the people for a vote, Sales Tax and no property tax is his vote in this matter.

Parish President stated we have six (6) months to sell or loose it. If we don't put it one the ballot the effort on the roads next year will be reduced. Road work was put on hold to recover from the flooding. \$300,000 already on repairs from the flooding. And if the parish repairs all the work that was identified from the flooding it will run over a million dollars. Its critical that we put it on the ballot this year and if they don't vote for it, the Parish will continue to fight this battle.

Councilman Paige made some comments about what other parishes has done when their highway department was not able to function with out money, they shut it down, and he was asked is this what he wants, he said no I'm just telling you what has happened with other parishes and an option that is there.

Mr. Verret wanted to get clarity on it also, he stated if the highway department can't provide a level of service that is acceptable now, would this be acceptable to the citizens if it closes.

Councilman Paige, stated look there is people now sitting in the audience right now that would like to tell you about the services they're getting that's not acceptable. When you go and half do roads, and patch only two holes when there.

Ms. Jessie Lewis from the Boston Fowler Road wanted to let the Council know something needs to be done to their road the Boston Fowler Road and the Rex Waterwell Road. You have to go through the ditch to get to their house their are some huge holes in the road and you can't miss them. Ms. Lewis stated she had her car fixed twice and the last time the mechanic brought her home and he said this is your problem now. You can't avoid the pot holes. Ms. Lewis stated their are so many, and when the Highway Department does comes out the will fill up two potholes and when it rains whatever they put in them comes out. She wanted to know, Why do they come out to fill two (2) holes when there are fifty (50) to sixty (60)holes? Ms. Jessie Lewis say she will support a sales tax, but not a property tax.

Johnnie O'Con spoke and said she asked Mr. Russell Rachal to help with their roads, and he stated their roads will be fixed, but it have not. only two pot holes was done and when it rain you can't even get down there. She stated it's time out for all this, they need something done to their roads.

Mr. Verret wanted to comment on what was said, he stated they have over forty (40) pave roads needs to be done. All the paved roads are in bad conditions. The Parish only have one (1) pothole patching crew. One Parish dump truck is being used and with one truck you can't take care all the roads the Parish. The two leased vehicles will be available next week.

Ms. Carolyn Roy wanted to know the one(1)cent tax will generate over 2 million a year and the answer was yes.

Phillip O'Con made a comment invest in the lottery.

Clint Payne made some comments about the roads, the road condition is a thorn in everyone side. Mr. Clint Payne stated as a resident he is not informed of what's going on. Mr. Clint Payne stated they need a committed plan to sell to the residents of the Parish. He wants a costs to take care all the citizens roads. The Parish need to have a plan that will justify why this road is being done when it's being done. You need to show the other residents why a road is being done. You need to be fair to all residents why a road is being done. All roads are bad, so you need to tell people why this road has priority over this road being done. Research needs to be done on all these roads.

Mr. Bedgood stated before he made the decision on not putting it on the ballot and his people in his District called him and told him they would have loved the opportunity to vote on the matter, that he had taken the opportunity away from them to vote on a sales tax but not for a property tax. He said he got a lot of slack from the people in his District concerning it.

Richard Smith Sr. stated Payne Subdivision was at the top of the list for their roads to be fixed. He stated Payne was next on the list, and Councilman Paige stated that Payne has 400 to 500 homes back there and the culvert has been washed out and the residents have to travel on the other side and scared the other culvert is going to wash out. At that time Councilman Paige told Mr. Smith the Parish President have some news to tell people about Payne Subdivision.

Parish President informed the Capital Outlay Bill from 2015 which had \$515,000 in P1 and another \$500,000 in another for a million and fifteen and they were going to add around another \$238,000 which will make it for a million and three dollars the administration in Baton Rouge reduced the whole total down to \$500,000 in the Capital Outlay Bill for this year they submitted to the Legislative and it went to the House Ways and Means Committee. Today the House Ways and Mean Committee they took out the last \$500,000. So now there is nothing for Payne Subdivision. by amendment 4028 we have no money for Payne Subdivision.

Fish Hatchery, Blanchard, and Payne Subdivision have no money for any road projects at this time.

There was more discussion and then finally Parish President made his recommendation for the Council to vote for or against a Sales Tax. His recommendation were to have two (2) options: a Parish wide tax for a half cent (0.5) cent sales and use tax to be collected parish wide, i.e., Parish and City. This tax would generate an estimated \$3,250,000 per year with 50 percent of the amount collected in the City of

Natchitoches being reserved for improvements to public works in the City. The 50 percent is estimated to be \$1,125,000 per year. The other 50 percent of the City tax collection would be dedicated to Parish roads. **Option 2:** Three quarter (0.75) of a cent sales and use tax to be collected in the Parish Only. City of Natchitoches shoppers will not pay this tax. This tax would generate an estimate of \$1,500,00 per year and would be dedicated to Parish roads. If both propositions were to be approved by the voters, the sales tax would increase by one-half cents in the City of Natchitoches and by one and one-quarter cent (1.25) in the Parish. If both propositions were to be approved by the voters, the total estimated funds for Parish roads would be \$3,625,000 and the total estimated funds for City public works improvements would be \$1,125,000.

On motion by Chairman Rachal, duly seconded by Councilman Doug de Graffenried, that the Natchitoches Parish Council, in special and legal session convened, does hereby approved issuing public notice that the Parish will place a new road tax proposition on the ballot for consideration by the voters in the election to be held on November 8, 2016.

On a roll call vote, the vote thereon was as follows:

Ayes:	Councilman Rachal
Ayes:	Councilman de Graffernied
Nayes:	Councilwoman Hoover
Ayes:	Councilman Bedgood
Nayes:	Councilman Paige

Motion Passed

Since there were no further business,

On motion by Councilman de Graffernied, duly seconded by Councilman Chris Paige, that the Natchitoches Parish Council, in special and legal session convened, does hereby adjourn until the next regular or called meeting of the Natchitoches Parish Council.

On a roll call vote, the vote thereon was as follows:

Ayes:	Councilman de Graffernied
Ayes:	Councilman Paige
Ayes:	Councilwoman Hoover
Ayes:	Councilman Bedgood
Ayes:	Councilman Rachal

Motion Passed

Attest:

Russell Rachal, Chairman

Sheryl Frederick,
Council Clerk