

MINUTES
Of the Special Called Meeting, of
The Claiborne Parish Police Jury
1:00 pm
August 31, 2020
Police Jury Chambers
507 West Main Street
Homer, LA 71040

*****NOTICE*** - The Claiborne Parish Police Jury humbly requests that if you have a fever, shortness of breath or other cold or flu-like symptoms that you do not attend this public meeting. Minutes of the meeting will be available and posted on line at www.claiborneparish.org**

The Claiborne Parish Police Jury met in a legal, duly posted and called Special Session in the Jury Chambers of the Claiborne Parish Police Jury Complex, located at 507 West Main Street in Homer, LA at 1:00 pm. on Monday, the 31st of August. On being called to order by President Scott Davidson, the following Jurors were present:

James Laird, Mark Furlow, Kevin Gray, Mary McDaniel, Paul Cook, Tommy Sanders, Gil Dowies, and Rev. Willie Young.

District #7 Juror Joseph Merritt was absent due to illness.

There were 14 others present - Claiborne Parish Secretary-Treasurer Dwayne Woodard, Claiborne Parish Road Superintendent Tommy Durrett, Director of Libraries Pam Suggs, Parish Library Historian Wesley Harris, Claiborne Parish Sheriff Sam Dowies, Claiborne Parish Director of Homeland Security & OEP Dennis Butcher, E-911 Director Walter Johnson, CMMC CEO Tina Haynes, CMMC Director of Nursing Kristi Copeland, Town of Homer Mayor Xanthe Seales, Town of Haynesville Mayor Beverly Kilgore, Town of Homer Police Chief Van McDaniel, David Greene of Republic Waste, and Cathy Hightower of the Guardian Journal.

Hurricane Laura made landfall on the southwest coast of Louisiana in the early morning hours of August 27, 2020 near Cameron as a Category 4 storm and trekked through the state as hurricane strength storm thru the late afternoon Thursday, August 27, 2020. Claiborne Parish had hurricane force sustained winds as it entered the Parish around 11:00 am until it exited the Parish around 1:00 pm along with rainfall totals that varied from 3 ½ inches to 5 ½ inches. The eastern portion of Claiborne Parish along the Lincoln/Bienville/Union Parish lines were the hardest hit areas of the parish. Preliminary estimates are that Parish road crews removed over 3,000 downed trees off of over 220 plus named roads within the Parish over a 48-hour period. There were numerous trees on homes, businesses and structures in the Parish. Almost every road in the Parish had trees and/or power lines across them. The vast majority (98%) of Claiborne Parish residents and businesses experienced power outages in excess of 24 plus hours – some residents (20%) in excess of 100+ hours, both Claiborne Electric and Entergy's infrastructure were severely damaged. Phones and internet were lost as well.

The Special Called Meeting was called to order by President Scott Davidson.

Rev. Willie Young opened the meeting with prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance by Paul Cook.

Upon motion by Paul Cook, duly seconded by Kevin Gray, the Jury unanimously approved the Agenda as presented.

REGULAR AGENDA:

At this time, President Scott Davidson gave an update and thanked those who came out to help get roads opened and power restored from the damage caused during the high winds from Hurricane Laura on Thursday morning, August 27, 2020.

President Scott Davidson called for any request for assistance for anything need from other municipalities or agencies in our Parish.

Secretary-Treasurer Dwayne Woodard requested that all Parish permitting costs for storm damage be waived for 30 days to help the residents who are having to make repairs due to storm damage from Hurricane Laura.

Upon motion by James Laird, duly seconded by Mark Furlow, the Jury unanimously approved the request from Secretary-Treasurer Woodard to exempt all hurricane related permits for a thirty (30) day period ending September 30, 2020 to help facilitate the repairs from the damage caused from the storm.

Road Superintendent Tommy Durrett gave an update from the storm damage. He stated the all roads are opened with the exception of a few minor roads that still had trees down on them with power lines entangled in them. Superintendent Durrett stated that he has crews out cleaning up the debris from the road sides that were left from Thursday & Friday's road clearing. There were over 200 plus roads with trees across them and most of them had more than 10 trees down on each road.

Sheriff Sam Dowies reported that he had a great response from all agencies, except the LADOTD. He said that Walter Johnson manned the dispatch, along with four (4) others during the storm. Sheriff Dowies praised all agencies for working together and clearing the roads. He stated there were over 200 chainsaws going in our parish on that day.

OEP Director Dennis Butcher gave an update from his office. He stated that Claiborne Electric and Entergy have done a wonderful job getting resources to help restore the residents' power before, during and after the hurricane. As of today, Claiborne Electric still has less than 800 homes out and Entergy less than 1,000 out and are still working log hours, with extra crews, to get power back on to all homes and businesses in Claiborne Parish ASAP. All water systems, except Leatherman Creek stayed up and running. OEP/Homeland Security has requested diesel fuel for the parish's poultry farmers who are unable to secure fuel for their generators at this time. All roads appear to be open or another route available, except those that have power lines entangled in them.

OEP Director Butcher also wanted to address the statewide Burn Ban that has been issued throughout Louisiana by the Fire Marshall's Office. The reasoning is not for fire hazard or relief of first responders. The reason for the burn ban is that a lot of the water systems in the state have no power and therefore no pressure to fight fires if needed. He stressed that Claiborne Parish is not in this situation and that the burn ban will not be enforced and that the burning of vegetative storm debris is allowed in all Claiborne Parish Fire Districts.

District Two Juror and Haynesville Fire Chief Mark Furlow wanted everyone to be aware of the hazards of using a generator during power outages. He stated that he wanted everyone to be aware of the dangers of the deadly exhaust and possible death from carbon monoxide poisoning. Be sure your generator is away from the home and the exhaust is facing away from the house. Seven of the fourteen hurricane related deaths statewide were caused by this issue and our local departments have recently been on call where this was an issue.

CMMC CEO Tina Haynes updated the Jurors on the hospital. CMMC lost power from about 7:30 am Thursday until about 5:30 pm on Friday. It was a struggle with the current generator to keep their lab machines operating properly, but they were able to continue to operate. The hospital was at full capacity at the time of the storm.

David Greene of Republic Waste told the Jury that if they need anything that they are here for the Jury. He stated that he still had a few issues where there are low power lines, but they are operating business as usual. At the present time, Republic Waste has no capability to pick up hurricane debris from the sides of the roads. The Parish does not plan to enter into a debris pickup program at this time, due to the fact the vast majority of the debris is vegetative in nature and in the rural areas of the parish where it can be pushed back from the right-of-way back into the tree line from which it came.

Town of Homer Mayor Xanthe Seales told the Jury that the town water system held-up during the storm. There was one well up and running and can supply the town's water needs. She

stated that there was very little damage sustained during the storm and was thankful that it didn't hit Homer full bore like it was first predicted.

Secretary-Treasurer stated that he had spoke to Joey White of Claiborne Electric and they hoped to have everyone up and going by in the morning who didn't have trees on their lines or homes.

Town of Haynesville Mayor Beverlee Kilgore stated that she was thankful the storm turned. She said there were a lot of trees down, but thankfully there was very little structural damage in the Haynesville area.

Upon motion by Tommy Sanders, duly seconded by Mark Furlow, the meeting was adjourned.

Dwayne R. Woodard
Secretary-Treasurer

Scott Davidson
President