

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
July 8, 2008
Chairman Ronnie Smith
Vice-Chairman Jaclyn Hotard

Members: Haston Lewis, Danny Millet, Charles Julien, Jaclyn Hotard, Darnel Usry, Ronnie Smith, Cheryl Millet, Dale Wolfe, Steve Lee

PRESENT: Cheryl Millet, Steve Lee, Haston Lewis, Jaclyn Hotard, Ronnie Smith, Dale Wolfe, Danny Millet, Charles Julien, Darnel Usry

ABSENT: None

BID OPENING REPORT/AWARDS:

Lease for mineral exploration of Lot 1A East 11th Street (Mathieu Heights Subdivision, Edgard) Lot 19 Timbermill Subdivision - Garyville

Brenda Labat, Director of Purchasing, stated, *"The first bid the administration is recommending that we award is for the mineral exploration lease and the low bidder was Patrick Donahue Petroleum."*

MOTION: Councilman Lewis moved and Councilman Wolfe seconded the motion to award the bid for lease for mineral exploration of Lot 1A East 11th Street (Mathieu Heights Subdivision) Lot 19 Timbermill Subdivision - Garyville to Patrick Donahue Petroleum Properties. The motion passes unanimously.

Concrete Streets Parish wide - Removal and Replacement - Bid Award

Brenda Labat, Director of Purchasing, stated, *"The administration recommends awarding this to the low bidder, Louisiana Contractors."*

MOTION: Councilman Wolfe moved and Councilman Lee seconded the motion to award the bid for the removal and replacement of concrete streets parish wide to the low bidder Louisiana Contractors. The motion passes unanimously.

Animal Shelter

Paul Oncale, Director of Public Safety, stated, *"I am going to take the animal shelter. Basically on June 24th we opened up bids for the animal shelter. The lowest bid was \$746,000.00. Unfortunately the budget amount estimated for the shelter was \$450,000.00 and we received a letter yesterday afternoon from the architect and he is recommending that we reject all bids so that he can redesign and go from a steel structure to a conventional frame structure and hopefully we can get the costs down and go out and re-bid. Administration also recommends that we reject all previous bids, redesign and seek new ones."*

Councilwoman Hotard asked, *"Can we get from the architect, if we do change the structure of the building, is it going to be just as safe? Are there going to be any negatives to us changing the structure of the building?"*

Paul Oncale stated, "I spoke to him briefly. He wants to take the existing design of the steel structure and change it to a conventional wooden structure with 2x4's and so forth for framing."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "I would like to see a comparison as far as durability and how much life we would get out of the structure because I want to be able to compare the costs versus getting a structure made out of just conventional wood and stuff like that if it is not going to last as long, if it is not going to be as safe, if it is not going to serve the needs of the animal shelter than I want to be able to make an informed decision as to if we find the funds or just accept something that may not last as long or be as good. I want to be able to make that decision."

Paul Oncale stated, "I am certain that we can get him to do that."

MOTION: Councilman Julien moved and Councilman Lewis seconded the motion to reject all bids for the animal shelter. The motion passes unanimously.

BID OPENINGS - Debris Monitoring

Paul Oncale stated, "We opened up bids today on debris monitoring. There were different categories that need to be measured. I am not going to repeat everyone of them. There were three companies that submitted proposals. They were Meyers Engineering, Beck Disaster Recovery and All South Consulting Engineers. The administration recommends that we take these under advisement."

MOTION: Councilwoman Usry moved and Councilman Julien seconded the motion to take the three bid proposals for debris monitoring under advisement. The motion passes unanimously.

Pat McTopy - Janitorial Contracts (Carry Over)

Pat McTopy, Chief Administrative Officer, stated, "We don't have anything new to report. We are waiting for one of the contractors who is stationed out of state to return so that we can resume discussions with him."

Councilman Smith asked, "Would you like to remove this or carry it over?"

Pat McTopy stated, "If the council doesn't have a problem, we can remove it until we have a firm recommendation."

Dale Wolfe - Choice International - Presentation

Antoine Jasmine, Choice International, stated, "I had the opportunity to speak to Mr. Wolfe a few weeks ago. We were scheduled for a meeting a couple of weeks ago and because of my travels we were unable to meet, but we are here today to present to you Choice International School of Music and Performing Arts, which is a community development incorporation, which is considered a CDC, a non-profit with a 501C3. Choices admission is to assists in the development of the communities in which we are located in the styles that increases the community's abilities to generate and maintain economic income and wealth. Increase

economic income and wealth is needed to create safe communities. Communities with high human social capabilities have a crime violence poverty, higher rates of education attainment, employment and community service. Choice accomplishes the above by building human skills from social networking. This is done by two methods. Music and performing arts programming and adult community education attainment and career development to individual community members will build their social human capacities and in turn increase student's ability to generate and maintain income wealth which will increase economic stability. The individual and community over all choice target populations are all members of the community in which they are located. I want to again thank Councilman Wolfe for this opportunity. Again we are a 501C3 organization. We have several components and several success stories. If you have seen the Hornets play, the gentleman that sings before the games, he is a student at Choice International and has a lifetime contract until he is older and his voice changes. He is eleven years old. Also we are in partnership with Central State University, which is a University in the Ohio area, which we have networked in part with them to assist out of state students to obtain music scholarships. Last month we received a call from River Parish Mental Clinic, which they have several issues of children with problems, so our program has been extensively helpful in the recovery of a mental issue/social issue with a child. Also we have a network with the American Idol Association, which we help individuals develop for American Idol. We are also a member of the Grammy Award Board member and the Atlanta Chapter. We have several national and local advisory board of directors. We are also in partnership with St. John the Baptist Parish Public Schools to assist in establishing music back to the schools. Mrs. Cheryl Millet was very instrumental in helping us to get into the schools again and I thank her for that. We also have partnership with the Dayton, Ohio public school system as well. We are strong and we would extend to you to take advantage of some of the programs that we offer. One is adopt a child through music. We have a data of children who just cannot afford the music education. So business owners, as well as entities, have partnered with us to assist in taking children from ages five to twenty-one to help constrict that child and give them elements of life skills and discipline. We are here today to collaborate with a community that is doing great things. We also have a predominately youth board of directors and they are here today to share with you what they have obtained through the program. Also in your packet you have an Angel Food certificate, which is food valued at \$100.00. Our organization has partnered with this food distribution to obtain the community food, the list of the menu is there for you."

Devon Mitchell, Jasmine Baskin and Blaine Robertson shared their success stories with the council commenting on the positive influence Choice International Music has made in each one of their lives and what they have also witnessed through Choice International Music. They offered their testimonies and requested help and sponsorship from the parish for their organization.

Antoine Jasmine stated, "In closing, the proof is in the pudding that the program is working. It takes more than one entity to do what we are doing. We want to do more for the community. It is not extensively African American we serve the entire community. They have been successfully impacted by the program because we care about what we do. We are a community based program. In closing there is a certificate we

would like to invite the council and other tiers of leadership to an event that we have this Saturday. I believe family is very essential. This is a great family environment, we will have fireworks and spacewalks at our new site located at 2925 New Hwy. 51 in LaPlace. That is all I have for you today, I am going to hand this back over to Councilman Wolfe. Thank you."

Councilman Wolfe stated, "Do we have any questions for Mr. Jasmine in terms of his program? If not, Mr. Jasmine how much would it cost to enroll a student?"

Antoine Jasmine stated, "Typically we have set within the package that you have. We are not state funded just let so typically the cost to sponsor a child for a year would be around \$2,000.00 a year. That includes recital fees, books, of course we have all degreed instructors up to a master's degree. So \$2,000.00 a year would extensively get a child going. It doesn't stop there, we want to see the child go all the way through, but we do have a scholarship program in place if they intended to leave the state. So \$2,000.00 will get a child for the year tuition to participate in the program and it would start immediately."

MOTION: Councilman Wolfe moved and Councilman Julien seconded the motion to recess the finance meeting and go into the Regular council meeting. The motion passes unanimously.

MOTION: Councilman Julien moved and Councilman Wolfe seconded the motion to go back into the finance meeting. The motion passes unanimously.

Councilman Wolfe stated, "For the council and the general public, this is the best I have heard since slice bread. I do believe in investing into the community. I would like to make a motion that this council adopt three kids and finance them for this program. The funds should or may come out of the EDC budget. I would like to make a motion that we do that."

Councilman Lee stated, "In discussion I think it was an excellent presentation. This is the first of heard of them and I want to thank them for coming here tonight. I was very impressed with the young people and their successes and I think that testimonies like that go a long way in reaching at least my soul and in turn my pocket book. I just want to ask my fellow council members. We have a department now that we expanded this year that Mrs. Elois Joseph oversees and it has a budget. I am sure it is something that I would be willing to support. I just believe in doing things the right way. I just think it should go through that department rather than come to this council meeting and ask me right off the cuff to just give \$6,000.00 to something that I have heard about for the first time. Now if we didn't have a department that dealt with human services and human programs than I would have to make a decision and study it a lot more myself. Clearly we expanded that department this time around and I thought a large reason for it was in order to deal with personal people programs, as my fellow councilmen and protégée Mr. Wolfe said. I just think this needs to go to administration before it comes back to us with a recommendation. I feel certain that it will. I think it is only appropriate that we follow those channels. That is just my position on it. It is not

something that I am against in any way, shape or form. It is just that I believe that would be the appropriate channel."

Councilman Wolfe stated, "First of all I don't see any connection with Mrs. Elois's program in reference to the request that Mr. Jasmine is making. He is making a request asking for some funds. We are the council. We approve funds. Mrs. Joseph's program deals with getting funds and making funds available for people that are in need and at this particular time her program is geared at helping the community, not funding programs such as this. I see no reason why we should have any obstacles in terms of this program. We have funded programs before. We have invested into the community before. I see no reason to detour from that program. My position stands. We had testimonies from young people saying how this program is helping. Helping the community and them, to me it was an excellent presentation. It spells out the need for participation. I suggested to Mr. Jasmine that when he leaves here, he go to the school board and try to get some funds to support his program. We are in dire need of youngsters that will be the heads of our communities. We are in dire need of keeping our youngsters on the positive road and doing things the right way. I think it is the right way to come before this council and ask that we participate. No reflection on Mrs. Joseph, but that is a totally different program. It is just as simple as this council wants to adopt three kids, than we do so. I don't want to send Mr. Jasmine to Mrs. Joseph's program, that is not necessary. The necessary thing is that we take responsibility. If we want to, if we see a need and fund such programs."

Councilman Julien stated, "First I would like to commend Choice and Mr. Jasmine. One of the young people I know is Blaine. Blaine's brother is at an Ivy League School right now, he just left on a scholarship. He scored I think a 28 on the ACT, his mother didn't want the older brother to know because she didn't want sibling rivalry. I just think that in him having a 28 on the ACT, that in itself is enough to say that we should sponsor this group. This is a group that has been around. I am familiar with them. I see the big bill board when we come off of I-10 around new 51. I just think that it is a great program and I understand Mr. Lee's concerns. We just can't spend the tax payer's money any kind of way, but I think they have to understand that this is a small price to pay for what we are getting in return."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "I am familiar with Mr. Jasmine and Choice. Every Thursday at 5:30 the drums start beating. My store is located directly below Mr. Jasmine's, so I get to hear the music that comes out everyday, all the time. While he is doing good things with these kids and I think he is doing great things and I think his association with the school board is doing a great job with that as well in reaching a lot of kids. My only concern is that I, like Mr. Lee, believe that we need to go through the department that we have established in order to do this because this is why we established that. I know about the kids. I have seen them come up and I have seen the entire situation going on. I think you are doing a great job. I think working through the school system the way you are is doing a great thing with these kids. But for this council to make that recommendation, I think it is unfair at this time to ask that. I think it needs to go through the right channels. That is why that department was created."

Councilman Smith stated, "I have known Mr. Jasmine for a minute or two. We have met several times. My angle is a little different. As most of you know, I participate very heavily in recreation and I have my own athletic program where throughout the entire summer I am tied up with kids of the community. Something like this needs to take place. Whether it is athletics, music these young adults need a place to go. You are complaining about them hanging on the streets. You are complaining about this and that happening. This is an avenue to take some of these people off of the streets. This is an avenue to help a child grow and give them an opportunity that they may not have any other way. Like Mr. Wolfe said, we have funded other programs before and I really don't want to go back and stir that up, but we have funded other programs before and I can promise you the \$6,000.00 that Mr. Jasmine is asking for is the least that we have funded. I do understand what Mr. Lee is saying. I really don't think and again I have to agree with Mr. Wolfe on this one, I don't think Mrs. Joseph's program is set up for that. So I will tell you right now I am going to vote in favor of giving Choice International the funds they need to support these three upcoming kids."

Councilwoman Hotard asked, "Mr. Jasmine how does your organization decide when we choose to fund three kids, what three kids? Is it an application process? Is it a scholarship that they receive?"

Antoine Jasmine stated, "It is an application process. If you in your area or your district you see that you have a kid that has potential. You can choose the kid yourself. We will give you an accountability system. You will be invited to the recitals. You would get progress reports. It is a really extensive accountability factor that we have. So we don't intend to leave LaPlace. We are doing the same replication in the Dayton, Ohio area as well. We work strongly with the politician's there as well. You can choose your own youth. We do have a pool of those that are on hold. It is based on income of the family. It can be based on honor roll students that are maybe having behavioral problems. So it can be a multitude of things. We get calls everyday. So whatever you discretion is we can fall in rank with that."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "I just didn't know if maybe there were kids who have applied that are waiting to be admitted because of funds."

Antoine Jasmine stated, "We do have many children waiting. I sponsor over ten children myself, just because we recognize in the end they come back and give back to their community."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "Thank you, I am going to support your request for the funds for these three kids and I do commend you on what you are doing."

Councilman Lewis stated, "I think everybody wants to support this program. Whether we get the money from EDC or from Elois, it will be taxpayer's dollars as it is. I think we need to let them know that we are going to do something to help them and let them go along their way."

Councilman Wolfe stated, "Well first of all I don't think Elois's budget allows for that. Secondly I know we have EDC dollars available."

So it doesn't make sense. If we haven't visited Elois's program and we don't know anything about Elois's program than I am not trying to be a horses, but don't even mention Elois's program because that is a totally different animal than what we are talking about. We try to make things difficult to try and help the kids. I really don't understand that. I really don't. We all know about EDC funds. We should know where every dollar is. It doesn't need to be difficult."

MOTION: Councilman Wolfe moved and Councilman Julien seconded the motion that this council adopts three kids in the amount of \$6,000.00. The funds should come out of the EDC budget. The motion passes with 6 yeas (Wolfe, Lewis, Julien, Hotard, Smith, Usry), 2 neas (Lee, Cheryl Millet) and 1 abstaining (Danny Millet).

Any and all other financial concerns

There were no other financial concerns.

Adjournment

MOTION: Councilman Julien moved and Councilwoman Millet seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion passes unanimously.