

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
September 10th, 2013
Chairman Jaclyn Hotard
Vice-Chairman Art Smith

Members: Lucien Gauff, III, Jaclyn Hotard, Art Smith, Ranney Wilson, Lennix Madere, Marvin Perrilloux, Michael Wright, Larry Snyder, Cheryl Millet

PRESENT: Lennix Madere, Art Smith, Marvin Perrilloux, Lucien Gauff, Ranney Wilson, Jaclyn Hotard, Cheryl Millet

ABSENT: Michael Wright & Larry Snyder

BID OPENING REPORT/AWARDS:

Jaclyn Hotard - (Carry Over 8-27-13) Authorization to solicit proposals for facility management of the St. John Civic Center

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "What I would like to request is that we authorize the administration to solicit proposals just for some assistance maybe with the Civic Center similar to what they have in Kenner and Ascension Parish for LaMar Dixon and Pontchartrain Center. I think until we know what is out there we don't know what direction that we need to go in but I do know that we have had some issues with our residents trying to rent the facility but our residents have managed I guess to figure out some of these other centers possibly depending on what proposals we get back we may get one, we may get none it could work in conjunction with the Tourist Commission or maybe even put some of their thoughts together on how we can move forward with making sure that our residents do have access to the building so what I am asking for is that we just solicit proposals to see what is out there. There may not be anything that we can accept but I think we don't know until we check out the market place. We could possibly look at what they did in Kenner to procure a management contract or even in Ascension with the Lario Center I am not sure who runs theirs so maybe look at some of those so that we can get an idea of what we need to put in our specs and understanding that while we are looking for proposals we are not bound to anything we are just seeing what is out there."

Natalie Robottom asked, "This council just actually renewed the contract with the Tourist Commission in June and we have representatives from the Tourist Commission here. During that time based on concerns from the council some administrative concerns we met with the staff and amended the contract to address what those concerns were and as recent as August 13th this council reduced those rates which we think was the primary factor with our residents being able to rent the facility. All of those just took place within the last month and really we don't feel that they have been given an opportunity to see what difference it is going to make but we do know that the cost to rent any of those facilities cost more than what ours cost and any type management company will require a fee so if we are complaining about

the current rates as they are and we have to pay a management company that makes their fee based on the rentals then I anticipate our rate will have to increase and I don't think that is the direction this council wanted to go. We were trying to decrease our rates to allow the residents to fully participate. We think the last incident was solved amicably the contract has been signed by Krewe du Monde, the rate has been reduced by 20% as directed by the council and I know the staff at the tourist commission is seeking other comparable proposals. What was not discussed at that meeting was that many of those facilities have requirements that you purchase certain things from them and through them which actually increases the cost that are not really included in what we do here. So my request is one to if there is a very specific scope or something that you are looking for obviously this request is to have us do something in terms of a request but we would have to have the scope that you are looking for and two if there are any concerns regarding our existing agreement that you address it with the tourist commission who is here. Again all of this just took place over the last month I don't think it has been given an opportunity to see how it will work and we would request that we do that there are a lot of things that we are doing right now and priority wise this is not one of them."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "Just a couple of comments and I definitely understand where you are coming from Mrs. Robottom but one thing maybe there was an assumption about what could possibly happen to the rates and until we get information from any other companies we don't know what affect it would have on the rates. We don't know if in their negotiation process rates would be higher or lower we won't know that until we get some submittals. I know there are some requirements for food but again this is just to see what is out there that can be something that is in the negotiation process with someone or when we ask for proposals we may see that none of the proposals actually fit what we are looking to do. So we are not really bound by anything and we won't know what direction we need to go into unless we look at it. We can't make an assumption about the rates unless we look at what they would actually submit to us it may put us in a better position than what we are now. I know we did take some action but again it was just one flat thing and like I have said before we have dance companies, we have schools, we have private organizations and they are able to rent the Pontchartrain Center and all of these other places. I would want to understand how they are able to do that and we have not been as successful and I don't think that they have been able to do that because they have a flat 20% off of a non-profit because a dance company we know isn't a non-profit. So what I am asking for is that we just look to see what is out there and you are right it is not something that has to be done this second but at least authorize you guys when time permits to be thinking okay should we look and see how someone could assist us because that is what I am looking for somebody that can assist us to fill the facility, assist our residents and maybe it could be something that is profitable and if we have concerns about

requiring our residents to purchase food from them it is something that we can look at in their contract now if we get proposals from some of these companies and they say absolutely under no terms do we ever do that then we say no that is not the direction we are going in but we won't know any of that or how it will even benefit our residents unless we actually look at it."

Natalie Robottom stated, "I will allow them to speak but I thought it was clear under your last vote that you directed them to seek out that information and to see how other programs are run and we have some of that information and I think Mrs. Banner had suggested that she made some attempts but I know she has done some additional work so I will allow them to address where they are currently going but I do know that they started taking action and even before that the previous one had selected some data on how other systems work basically what we are looking at is an agreement with a local organization that houses themselves in our facility at no charge to us. Any rental rate that we get comes directly to the parish, any management company regardless of what it is are going to charge a fee and just please be aware that the current contract that we have entered into allows for the Tourist Commission to remain if this agreement is discontinued or terminated it allows them to remain in the facility rental free I think for a year. So addition to having them still remaining we would be paying someone whereas right now we are not but I will allow them to address this."

Councilman Perrilloux stated, "I understand what you want to do Ms. Hotard but I am not in favor of removing the commission. The last meeting we had we had a lengthy discussion as to what we want them to do as far as proms, weddings and balls and now I want to give them a chance to shop the building, shop it to the community. We told them we wanted a 20% reduction so now I want to give them the chance to go out there and shop it because you all know how I feel about that building but I am willing to give them the opportunity to show me what you can do we have given them directive and I am waiting for them to come back with results so I am not ready to replace or move them at all or get somebody else."

Councilman Wright arrived at 6:08 PM.

Councilman Madere stated, "I am in agreement with Mr. Perrilloux. I am sitting here listening to everything and like I said at the last meeting we had a long discussion about it and I think the main thing we always try to understand and get at is that we want that building to be used by the local people, the schools for proms and any other functions and to make it available to the people and I think reducing it by 20% we have to give it a chance to see if that actually works or not and we may have to reduce it again if possible and bringing someone else in is not going to solve the problem as to how we get the people in our community to understand that we are trying to make it affordable for

them to use. I do think at this time we need to allow the decision that we made at the previous meeting to stand at least a year, didn't you say the contract was until then but we need to find out if it is working I think we are moving too quick. We just put something in place and we need to give it an opportunity to grow a little bit and see what can happen."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "I just want to clarify in my recommendation in my motion it was never to and I said that when I first started talking, to remove the tourist commission at all but to test the market place not that even if we were in favor of any of the other proposals that they couldn't work in conjunction with the tourist commission or that we were bound by any of those proposals but in order to even get an idea of how they operate other facilities we won't know unless we ask and so asking for proposals is simply that it is not saying that we are looking to replace the tourist commission that is not my intention. I was actually part of the council that moved the tourist commission into the civic center to try and help to promote the building so that is not what I am saying. What I am asking for is to look at some other contracts and arrangements that other companies have with facilities and actually see they may even be able to provide technical assistance to the tourist commission to help them better provide what it is to us and I think the goal is to get the building rented by residents. So let me just make that clear that that is not the intention of what I am asking for to remove the tourist commission of their duties are to overstep it was just to say let's see what is out there and it may even be able to offer them some assistance as well. I know at one of their meetings right before we had our last council meeting I received some correspondence that they didn't want to negotiate the rates and I know that these companies have figured out a way to negotiate the rate that may be something that they can assist the tourist commission with or like I said give some technical assistance to us with. So that is what I was asking for to get proposals to see what is out there not to get rid of anyone, not to replace anyone but to find out how we could better serve the needs of our residents and possibly have two things going on at one time."

Paul Aucoin, Chairman of the RP Tourist Commission, stated, "From the tourist commission stand point we are very pleased to continue operating as we have been for the last 4-5 years that we have operated and managed the center. We think it is a win/win situation for the parish and for the tourist commission. We feel that we have done a good job now we know that there are certain things that have to be tweaked and were tweaked at the last meeting and like Councilman Perrilloux said we would like the opportunity now to see if we can carry forth with those new instructions. We are willing to operate the center on any rate structure that you tell us to that is not our call we don't want to be rate setters. These management companies want to be rate setters because when they set the rate they get a percentage of that

rate. We don't get a percentage. We are there every day doing what we have to do at no charge to the council. We get office space out of it and we appreciate it and the amenities. If there is any question that I can answer from anybody I would appreciate the opportunity to answer any questions. I do want to say that our executive director was ill and that is why she isn't here tonight."

Councilman Snyder arrived at 6:15 PM.

Councilman Wilson asked, "How long have you all been in charge of this?"

Paul Aucoin stated, "We estimate around 2006 perhaps."

Councilman Wilson asked, "What has been brought there?"

Paul Aucoin stated, "You are asking me to give you a list of things that I don't have in front of me but I will be happy to provide you a list of the accumulated rentals we have had since 2006."

Councilman Wilson stated, "I was just wondering what events have taken place at the facility other than the Andouille Festival. Have there been any trade shows?"

Jo Banner, RPTC, stated, "Since the time that we have been in the building we have had weddings, in fact we had a wedding earlier this year. We have had school functions. We have had proms. We have had commercial shoots, movie productions and all of those different things. Relay for Life consistently uses our building so we have had a variety of different type of events and like Paul said we can definitely give you a list of all the different events we have had in the building since we have been in there."

Paul Aucoin stated, "One thing I would like to say and you may have difficulty doing this with a management company but during Isaac we vacated the building for well over a month and worked from home at no charge now what would a management company do under those circumstances they would want to be paid for that. Our staff worked from their homes and we would meet periodically at a location and try to keep things working but think about that when you are talking about somebody who is here in the parish with you, members of the community working with you to make the center work and make a better place for everybody."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "Let me just clarify this even with Mr. Wilson's line of questioning. I am not in any way questioning what events you have brought to the center or anything like that. So I want to change the tone of the conversation and also Mr. Aucoin as you mentioned what a management company would do again I don't want to speculate on what a management company would do what I am saying is

that we are just looking to find out how they run their center whether we take some pieces from what they are doing and add that into what you guys are doing we won't know until we actually test the market place and see what is out there. Again that isn't saying that we are getting rid of the tourist commission, that isn't saying that I am questioning the tourist commission's ability but what I am questioning is just the fact that we have had some issues with renting the building out. It isn't anything on the tourist commission you have done what we have asked you to do. We said this was the rate structure and that is what you went with. We have asked for you guys to negotiate the rates like the other companies do and you said that you weren't comfortable with that so we did the 20%. So again it is not an attack or saying that we are getting rid of the tourist commission but let's look and see what other facilities do and what can we do with what we have to enhance the operation that we have going on because we know it has some flaws not by fault of the tourist commission, not by fault of the council or the administration but what is going on just hasn't been working. So I don't want that message to be there and I know you guys keep defending and saying that you like to stay there and you like to be there well I am not suggesting that you pick up and leave or that that would be the outcome of seeing how other centers are managed. So I just want to clarify that up right now so we don't have to continue to plead the case of why you want to stay in the building because that is not what I am asking for. I am asking to find out how are these other centers successful and let's take those best practices and incorporate that into what we have or possibly if we have to have one of those management companies if the terms and conditions would work for us and it is something that the council at some point would say okay that would work for us and they could work in conjunction with the tourist commission then we can go that route but looking to see what is out there doesn't cause anyone to leave. It doesn't make anybody stay. It doesn't make the rate go up or down. It does nothing. We get proposals all the time for all types of things this is no different and a lot of times we get proposals for things that we already have contracts with other companies for because we want to test the market place. We have a request for proposals on the agenda tonight for services that companies are providing now granted it is at the end of their time that it is expiring but we know that we have a situation with the civic center that we haven't been able to totally make it useful for our resident. So I just want to change that part of the conversation on if we want them to stay or to go because that is not what I am looking to do."

Councilman Madere asked, "How long has the center been there?"

Paul Aucoin stated, "Since 2006."

Councilman Madere stated, "The way I look at it is I think we gave them some clear direction as to what discounts because I don't think they ever had any clear directions or orders in the previous council with

exactly what it is that they wanted them to do. I think this council is the first one that is saying lets reduce the rate by 20% and I think we also instructed them to reach out to some of the other places some of our residents have been going and renting their facilities. So it is easy to call and find out what they charge for a prom or other type of functions they should give you the rate."

Jo Banner stated, "They will not tell you."

Councilman Madere stated, "They will tell me. I will call and say I am booking it. I can say a quick lie. You can find out they have to tell someone. You cannot book a building and then all of a sudden get the rate after you signed the paperwork so they have to tell someone what they are doing. So I am saying it is easy to find that information out. We decided 20% to reduce it. We need to give what this council put in place a chance to operate because the previous one never gave them any direction since what I heard last time there was no direction as to how you wanted them to operate in your building. It is my building and if I say cut it by 50% you cut it by 50%. If I say you let the high school use it for free, you let them use it for free there is no negotiating in there. First we need to give what this council directed them to do a chance to work. We have a year to be able to find that out and if it doesn't work then maybe we have to do something else but before we even get out the box good enough to go somewhere else I think we need to let it ride and see what happens."

Councilman Snyder stated, "First I want to apologize for being late, had to take care of the wife but I go along with Mr. Lennix in that we need to find some ways so the local people can use this building and I looked at some numbers and I mentioned to someone in administration in that where does the \$6,000.00 base pay come from? I look at that number then I look at the number for Pontchartrain and from that the Pontchartrain didn't have any other line items except the \$5,500.00 they rent their building for but our building you have to put too many other things into it and I think that is where we come in at. I think that we can, if we look at this situation, how can we get that number down? We don't have a chair in there we have to rent them chairs. Now if we can get that number down so that our people can use that building at a reasonable rate. We have a bond issue coming or trying to get a bond issue coming and see what we can do to bring that price down. I still would like to find out where did the \$6,000.00 come from. Can someone answer that for me? The base rate of \$6,000.00"

Jo Banner asked, "Can I make a clarification?"

Councilman Snyder stated, "That is all I want to know where did the \$6,000.00 come from?"

Jo Banner stated, "The \$6,000.00 would be for using the entire facility."

Councilman Snyder asked, "But why \$6,000.00? Is that just a number that came off the top of someone's head or what?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "Just for clarification, the original rate and they are the same rates per room, the atrium and all that were set when the building was started and that was based on calling and getting cost from other neighboring facilities that was the original rate. However when you added all three of those rooms the price was so much people couldn't afford to rent the entire facility and under the Hubbard administration he submitted \$6,000.00 for the entire facility but initially the proposal was if you rented more than one spot you added all of those together but once you did I think it was over \$8,000.00 and so he just decided \$6,000.00 and that is what is on the form. Now keep in mind every place is different and I don't know if you were here but whereas you can rent I think it ended up being \$5,500.00 rather than \$6,000.00 which was very comparable to the Pontchartrain Center however there is a requirement that you purchase the food and it is my understanding that can run as much as \$35,000.00. We don't have that requirement in our center. So even though they choose to use us the savings and we have made a reduction and we supported it and recommended a 20% reduction for non-profits. What we don't know about and what wasn't included in some of the bills that you saw was the things that they required you to purchase from the other facilities. Every other rate that is in it is based on the cost to us for example we get rates from the Sheriff's office on what will you charge for detail so that is what we pay. When we staff it with our employees they have to be compensated and many times it is overtime. So we are compensating them at an overtime rate. Now we work with the renter to say what number do you need based on the number of people you are expecting and we actually reduced that with the Krewe of Dumond because we didn't think that they needed the number that they had and security. So in trying to get that down but that is just for the cost but one of the things we do have some chairs and tables but we don't have enough and that might be an investment that we make so that every time we rent the facility we don't have to rent the chairs and tables. So there are ways to look at it. Again I think Jo has been working on that based on not only your request in August but we made a request too to start looking at how do we put this in a way that is affordable to our residents, let's see where we are and how other people are doing it so that we would have that information. Additionally we asked her to remove and I am not sure if it is in there but I was very direct when I said we are not renting a facility and not kicking you out within 30 days if a movie comes here that is not going to be our practice. So if that language is still on that contract document it needs to be removed that was not my policy that was the previous administration's policy. If you book it it's yours. We are not kicking you out and reimbursing

you for taking your event somewhere else. Now I have documents that show exactly how much we paid for our local schools to rent other facilities so we have some numbers and we know that we are comparable, as a matter of fact we are cheaper. So again we are going to ask that they take that information pull it together and bring it back to you as you requested but I will let Jo and Paul address it more."

Councilman Snyder asked, "So the \$6,000.00 came from the top of someone's head? Now when you go to Pontchartrain and I don't know exactly how much it is someone told me \$5,500.00 but it includes 2,000 to 3,000 seats now we have to rent that you see. Now like I was mentioning earlier we have an opportunity to look at that closely if we are serious about getting people in our area to use that place and I really don't think a change in management is going to do anything with that but I am going to respect Ms. Hotard's wish to go out and see what everything looks like but I think that is something we need to look at and we need to make some decisions on."

Councilwoman Hotard asked, "Let me ask this from the tourist commission and previously when the request was made about you guys negotiating rates you said no. Do you ever want to be in a position where you are going to negotiate the rates like a management company?"

Paul Aucoin stated, "If you mandate to us that we have to negotiate rates to occupy the building we will but if you think about it that is a lose/lose for us. If we charge too much nobody can use it who gets the heat we do. If we charge too little and we don't pay the bonds who gets the heat we do. So what is in it for us to do that? It should be up to the council. It is your building set the rates and we will enforce it.

Now if you want to take a hit or minor loss on certain events that is fine with us but if somebody could explain to me what is the advantage to us for setting rates then I will be happy to listen to it but I see no advantage for the tourist commission to be in the business of setting rates on a building that the parish owns. All we are going to do is be setting ourselves up for more meetings like this with people coming and saying why did you charge this for that and then we have nothing to show at the end of the year towards paying the bond off."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "Mr. Aucoin the reason why I was asking that is because that is part of what I think looking at some of those management companies will allow us to understand is we know that they are in positions where they do negotiate their rates and they don't run into the pitfalls that you are bringing up. The city of Kenner, their council owns that building but they don't separate that company has figured out some type of way and they are using some perimeters to negotiate those rates to book the facility. So that is what I was asking you when do you think if Jo you said you are working on some things at the direction of the council with the rates when do you think

you will be in a position to come back to us with those rates and with the ability to work under those same perimeters that they do where they do negotiate the rates, when do you think that you can come back to us and I can say okay we can look at that time when you come back and present something it may be acceptable to the council to move in the direction that we want to go and work on that in the meantime and if not then we have to come back out and look at what management companies do but I want you to definitely look at that because again they don't run into the problems that you are mentioning. They don't go before the city of Kenner and Mike Yenni tells them well why did you give that one and the council that isn't how the center works. It books and it is always full. The hotels are full. The restaurants are full and everybody benefits."

Paul Aucoin stated, "You sort of answered your own question with the hotels and restaurants right next to the center like that and the population is also a big factor, the population of Jefferson and Kenner but to answer your original question we can have it ready for the next meeting. We will bring it in whatever information she can gather between now and the next meeting she will share it with you and if you feel that there is more information out there that we weren't able to get that you know of let us know and we will try to get as much information together to bring to the next meeting."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "Okay that sounds fair we will leave this item on the agenda and if you run into any problems getting the information because I know it is very detailed give me a call and I will go ahead and carry it over but I would like to really look closely at those facilities, how are they negotiating rates and not running into the problems that you are saying because I agree.."

Paul Aucoin stated, "I will also look into the occupancy rate that they have based on their rates in other words the occupancy is going to be determined a lot on the rate that they charge whether they occupied everything or was there once a month or less."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "And that is why they negotiate the rates because they know their occupancy."

Councilman Wilson stated, "I just want to say I wasn't taking a shot at the tourist commission I was just trying to find out what has happened in this facility since the beginning."

Paul Aucoin stated, "No we understand but I do want to correct the record I said that we were there since 2006. It was originally operated by Wayne Reed and then he left and that is when I suggested to President Hubbard that we would step in because they lost their manager. I am sorry President Monica not President Hubbard."

Councilman Snyder asked, "If I wanted to rent just one part of the building do I have to rent the atrium too?"

Jo Banner stated, "No there is a charge for the atrium if you want to use that as your main event center. So if you use the two separate stages you have access to the atrium to the bathroom and to walk through but if you just want to use it as you would have your event in the atrium then there is a charge for that."

Councilman Snyder stated, "Okay thank you."

Jaclyn Hotard - (Carry Over 8-27-13) Authorization to advertise for proposals for transcribing services for council meeting minutes

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "Thank you and this item is pretty clear as to what the agenda says. It is for us to advertise for a proposal for transcribing services to see if there is a more effective way to actually transcribe our minutes."

Councilman Perrilloux stated, "Again Ms. Hotard you and I have had extensive conversations on this and I am not questioning what our council secretary does but I am not willing to go out to advertise for transcribers until I can find out what our two legislative assistants are doing, that means I am going to have four people doing what when I may only need 2 or 3. We need to define what we have our legislative assistants do and maybe incorporate what Jackie needs to be done so that she can get the help with her job but I am not willing to advertise until we define what we are going to do with the other two people."

Councilman Gauff stated, "I agree with Mr. Perrilloux. I think this is something that definitely falls under Ms. Landeche's responsibility and skill set but we also have some other legislative assistants that could help. So if we designate or give them the responsibilities I don't see why we would need a fourth person to do this job. So I am also against that."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "Also Mr. Perrilloux we have had the conversations and I agree. The challenge that we are having is that we can't direct those civil service employees to do anything. So if Councilman Gauff or Councilman Perrilloux if you guys can figure out a way to direct those civil service employees we have been instructed by President Robottom not to actually one and I hate when we start talking about individuals but one of the individuals wasn't in our budget before and I believe when I spoke with Mr. Lucia you said that I think it was maybe the last budget year was when one of them actually started coming out of our budget, we only had two, so now we have two in our budget who are civil service employees and again I agree if we can direct them to do it but we don't have the authority to direct a civil service employee but we have one person and with some of the meetings that we have had that go until 10:00 PM if you have one person typing minutes and the way minutes are you have a head phone on so if you are one person and you have head phones on for days trying to type the minutes it takes away from doing other things because you can't even hear when the head phones are on and we don't have anybody else. So if

we can get some relief and maybe the administration can help us with that but I definitely agree if we can do that I agree."

Natalie Robottom stated, "We may need to have an outside meeting but I am looking at the job descriptions for your council secretary and the legislative assistant and the supervisor is the council and the legislative assistant is the council secretary and part of the job responsibility of the council secretary is to supervise the clerical staff. So the job descriptions were written and approved by the civil service board and the council that directed supervision and I know there were issues about funding because the charter doesn't allow you to hire but one person but historically the parish presidents have agreed to hire for the council and assign just as they do in other parishes these individuals to the council. So legislative assistant, we are an executive branch, so there is no need for us to have a legislative assistant and those job descriptions were created in 2004 at the direction of the council and I see one of them who was here and instrumental in it and we pulled the minutes because the council needed additional assistance. You had two clerks. It was the council secretary and two clerks and those positions were changed to legislative assistants and job descriptions were drafted and written with the council secretary as the supervisor. At the point when the other one retired and a legislative assistant moved up a receptionist was hired however there remained an employee on the West Bank and in supporting and I don't have a document but because the county seat is on the West Bank it was determined that there would be a council office on the West Bank and that employee is still housed here and historically they have done research and filed minutes and again all at the direction of the council. So I have job descriptions that specifically say who supervises who if that is different then maybe there needs to be some discussion probably outside of this meeting."

Councilman Gauff stated, "I guess my point is and just like you said not to name names but I guess we have had some issues that have come up when I was council chair and spoke with some employees and the comment was or the conversation went okay but then they said I am going to Mrs. Robottom. So they felt like what I said didn't matter as council chair and representing the council and what we wanted so I guess didn't give us any leverage in instructing my employer that I needed something done or I wanted something done a particular way then it was okay I need to go and talk to the president. So I think that also adds to where this council is and why some of this discussion is coming up."

Natalie Robottom stated, "Again if you want to review the job descriptions and make some amendments that is possible but I know you sign off on time and vacation everything is handled through the council office for those employees and again the job descriptions are very clear in terms of supervision and what the responsibilities are. There are times and times have changed where you might have to amend them so I would recommend that you review them because the council secretary one was revised in 2005. The legislative assistant one was created in 2004 and I think the revision was made because they added some employees and there was a requirement for supervision. So again the idea that they work for us is not necessarily the case. The funding the parish presidents agreed to fund them because you were only allowed to hire one person and I don't think that is a bad thing but it was based on need. So if there is a need to revisit the job descriptions for the

people who work for you then probably that would be the route you might want to take."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "I wanted to just add something. The transcribing services what we were actually looking at and what the thought process was wasn't to hire a full time staff person but similar to how you have a court reporter that comes in and types minutes and that was the only thing that they did. If there is a way and I know Lucien we kind of went through the same thing at that time to have the staff that we currently have do those minutes then that would be exactly what I am looking for. I was here in 2004 at the time we had a council secretary and the two clerks, we lost one and were left with two and we thought creating that legislative department would allow the council to assign some legislative tasks research, keeping of minutes and all of the things that were listed in there but what has happened over the years has been the running with the civil service but I will say this the council actually does have the authority. The charter says that we can employ a secretary but we do have the authority to hire people just as we have code enforcement officers and we set their time schedules and those types of things. So at some point if the council wanted to hire another employee or support staff we do have that authority the same way that we enter into contracts with code enforcement officers it would be through contract. President Robottom I know when Lucien had mentioned that employee that said they were going to see the president I believe she actually did in fact come and sit with you for some time and what we need assistance with is because that is the push back we are getting from civil service employees even when the council secretary tries to say we need you to do this it is I'm civil service and I am going to who the charter says civil service employees report to and even a couple of meetings ago you said they all answer to me and that is the sentiment that...

Natalie Robottom stated, "My employees these are yours."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "No but these are civil service also."

Natalie Robottom stated, "My employees answer to me and I will direct you to get with your attorney's and if this is inappropriate as written it is very specific as to what the job responsibilities are and who they report to. So if that is not the case we have two there who can investigate that for you with civil service and I would direct you to do that but it is very clear that these employees work for you."

Councilman Madere stated, "Mrs. Robottom as I understood what you were reading that is in the charter the secretary works for us and the two civil service workers that we are referring to can be directed by the council secretary as far as what they have to do."

Natalie Robottom stated, "That is what the job description says that is correct."

Councilman Madere stated, "Okay and basically those who say that they are going to run back and tell you they need to understand, everyone needs to understand what the pecking order is and who is in charge and who is not in charge in those particular situations. So I agree with Mr. Gauff and Mr. Perrilloux we have to put that position into action. If we have to go through the council secretary for her to give them a

directive to do it then that is what we have to do but we need to take advantage of what we have and allow them to do the work first. If we see this is not beneficial or is not being sufficient then we may need to move in another direction but I think we need to make sure that the people we have are doing what it is that the council is asking them to do without any questions."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "I think at this point and time we have a motion that Ms. Hotard has on the floor about going out for proposals for transcribing and I understand what you are saying but I think we are getting into an area that might cause problems because we are getting too specific in certain situations and I would rather discuss this off camera rather than put ourselves in that position. So at this point in time what I would like to do is to address the motion that is on the floor and if this council wants to not pass this motion and have another discussion at another time regarding that I would be more in favor of doing that."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "Again if there is a way that we can resolve this, my motion is to find out what a transcriber or court reporter or something like that would charge to type the minutes for us. If we can get the staff that we have to do it or our council secretary can direct those civil service employees to do it fine but we definitely have a production issue in the council office because it is one and we need some assistance and I think the minutes because we have been running so late at night to type, stop, play, rewind that is sometimes a four day process for our one employee."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "That is correct. So I think that at this point in time we should take the vote on going out for proposals. If you want to take that and go out for proposals that is fine if you want to go ahead and carry this over until we decide which way we want to handle it on the inside that is fine also but I think we are going beyond at this point in time."

Councilman Snyder stated, "It is just a proposal."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "Yes we are not bound by anything it is just a proposal."

MOTION: Councilwoman Hotard moved and Councilman Wright seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to advertise for proposals for transcribing services for council meeting minutes. The motion passed 7 yeas and 2 against (Madere & Perrilloux).

Lennix Madere/Marvin Perrilloux - (Carry Over 8-27-13) Authorization to enter into a one year contract with Eliza Eugene Enterprises to include the same terms and conditions of the most recently executed contract

Councilman Perrilloux asked that we continue to carry over this item.

Larry Snyder - Draft of each department's budget for 2014

Councilman Snyder stated, "I spoke with some people in administration about this and also the CFO and we came to the agreement that because

of the complexity of this process and the time it takes it is kind of tough to get each individuals budget for the year because there are many things that have to happen in between so I want to drop this and take it off of the agenda and we are going to leave it as is. I am satisfied with what I have and what I can do to find out what I want to find out."

Jaclyn Hotard - Budget

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "This item actually I did speak with Mr. Lucia and hopefully we are able to set up something on Friday. I had just been sending some budget requests to the finance department so I just wanted to make sure that those were duly noted and he has received them and we are going to try to work those out on Friday. I know President Robottom had requested that we submit our request that way through the financial department and that is what I had been doing and I just wanted to make sure that those were on the record that I had been sending those."

Kia Price - Authorization to advertise for bids for Bunker Gear

Kia Price, Director of Purchasing, stated, "Administration requests authorization to bid out Bunker Gear for the Office of Fire Services with funding through the 4 volunteer fire department budgets."

Councilman Snyder asked, "Just so that everyone is on the same page, this bunker gear is that for just the new people?"

Kia Price stated, "For the all the volunteers throughout the parish."

Councilman Snyder asked, "So what is going to happen with the bunker gear that we have?"

Cane Dufrene, Chief of Operations/Fire Services, stated, "The bunker gear is currently going to start to go out of date so we just need to replace it to get the guys some good stuff."

Councilman Snyder asked, "So it will be out of date and how many years is that?"

Cane Dufrene stated, "It is only good for 10 years."

Councilman Snyder asked, "How many more years do we have?"

Cane Dufrene stated, "We are looking at about 1-2 years on about 26 of them which puts us over the amount that we have to go out for bids."

Councilman Snyder stated, "Okay thank you."

MOTION: Councilman Gauff moved and Councilman Wright seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to advertise for bids for Bunker Gear. The motion passed unanimously.

Kia Price - Authorization to advertise for bids for The Taste of St. John Food Truck/Trailer

Kia Price stated, "Administration requests authorization to advertise for bids for the food truck/trailer which is a component of the \$215,000 BP grant. The Taste of St. John Campaign promotes Andouille and Louisiana Seafood."

Councilwoman Hotard asked, "Is this going to interfere with any of the food vendors at the Andouille Festival? I am asking because someone sent me a question about it."

Torri Buckles, Director of Economic Development, stated, "We are expecting to have the food truck online after the procurement probably in the first part of 2014. So at this point no the food truck will not be a part of this current Andouille Festival. Do you mean for our future Andouille Festivals? I can't answer that right now I will tell you that I think that the food truck is a new revolution in surveying many culinary items."

Natalie Robottom stated, "There shouldn't really be much of an interference it is one vendor truck and I think the goal in the proposal and the plan was to go and have this truck go to other festivals representing Andouille and seafood from our area. Now it could be a participant but how many vendors did you all select for this festival (asking Torri) there are about 21 vendors that participate in the Andouille Festival and I think we added some spaces this year to allow for more space so this may be one of twenty-one at our festival but the goal is not to replace it is to actually promote and we have to go to twelve other events outside of Andouille in other parishes promoting Andouille and seafood from a Taste of St. John. So the goal is not to compete with our vendors but to promote our stuff at other fairs and festivals which is what the grant promoted. So even though it might be a participant in ours it is only one truck."

Councilwoman Hotard asked, "Let me ask you this, the people who were actually serve the food on the truck will they be local vendors? Since you opened the door for that the 21 vendors are they all local vendors?"

Torri Buckles stated, "Yes they are."

Councilman Wilson asked, "For \$215,000.00 what kind of truck is this? Is it a trailer that will be pulled by a truck?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "Actually the entire truck is not \$215,000.00, the entire grant that we received from BP was for \$215,000.00 and that included marketing, the truck and there is a specific budget for the truck but there are other components to the grant. You will see some of

our signage, advertisements, marketing and television commercials so there is a lot that goes with it and it was all budgeted in the \$215,000.00 grant application. The truck is one component of that and we are putting it out for bids to see what that cost would be and I think Mrs. Buckles has investigated what the range may be but that is why we are putting it out for bid."

Councilman Wilson stated, "I was looking at the range on the type of truck that would do that. I don't understand that. Should it be like a bread truck or something bigger?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "No there are a couple of ways. They kind of look like the bread trucks but they have all of the facilities inside. They either cook and serve from it or they have trailers that a truck can pull that serves the same purpose but you have to have all of the cooking equipment, the facilities and everything inside of that vehicle to be able to transport the cooking and service atmosphere. It could be a truck or a trailer and some of them are the self-contained trucks and some of them are trailers."

Councilman Snyder asked, "Who set up the specs for the advertisement for this truck?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "Actually we worked with some of the specs that are online, the purchasing director, Torri as well as we contacted the Ag Center with regards to food and food preparation. We also made contact with folks that we know that have them like Ascension parish that provided food for us during the storm. They had a trailer so we reached out to them to get some information about theirs. We actually reached out to one of our local vendors who has a similar truck but it is not used for preparing food but we are working with them and I think Mrs. Buckles was planning to meet with people who actually cook. So we have an idea of what a truck should include but we have to consider our restaurants and people who will actually use it and what they think needs to be in it for their needs. So you know there are several opportunities to put input into what that truck will actually be and what will be the best use of it and make it easier for them to do what we are asking them to do which is to promote Andouille and seafood primarily at other festivals. It wasn't for our festival we already have tents and booths. We are trying to promote a Taste of St. John to other areas to get people to come in and try our food."

Councilman Snyder asked, "So this is not going to cost us anything?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "The BP grant."

Councilman Snyder asked, "So for our Andouille Festival it will be in the garage right?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "We didn't say that."

Councilman Snyder stated, "That was one of the questions I think."

Natalie Robottom stated, "We are not bringing people in in our trucks. It would be one of our local vendors so if you are in the Taste of St. John truck or behind a booth you are still promoting the food."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "No that is a big difference one is paying for a booth and one is not that is a big difference."

Natalie Robottom stated, "In terms of promotion. So we are not looking to compete. Everything is not a competition it is to promote it could be sitting there just to advertise. We are into the weeds on something that is a great idea and I want to commend Mrs. Buckles and Mrs. Valentine for thinking about it and we may be able to access some additional funds since they gave us this so quickly because they had a wonderful idea and we were one of two. We had the highest amount given to us in this grant because they did put together a wonderful proposal. So before knocking it too much..."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "I don't think anyone is knocking it they just wanted to understand it."

Councilman Wilson asked, "Mrs. Robottom, who is going to run this I mean at the other festivals. Who is going to handle it?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "There are some very specific details that are being worked out and basically we have to do twelve events, we can do more but there has to be an application process so whoever that local vendor is that is out promoting will be responsible for that fair some people may apply to go to the Catfish Festival and promote Andouille through whatever application process it may be them doing that but obviously our economic department will be heading it but it is a vehicle for promoting a Taste of St. John through many fairs and festivals and that process is being worked through."

Councilman Wilson stated, "Another thing I was wondering if possible it could be non-profit organizations that could do it. I have no problem with this at all they might be at the Jazz Festival. I am just trying to find out who is running it and say that we should give consideration to the non-profit organizations."

Natalie Robottom stated, "The grant is very specific to businesses and retailers. It is about promoting this event. It is all as a result of the oil spill. So they are trying to promote and get people back on their feet in their businesses by giving us this grant. So they are trying to get our retailers and businesses to be able to make money again especially those who might have been impacted by the oil spill."

So the grant is very specific as to who should have access now granted twelve is not many we may have more than that and we are not limited to twelve, we just have to do at least twelve based on the grant. We could do one every week if we had that number of people. So again it is a beginning we will have to work through the processes and generally we provide you with everything first in terms of the applications and what the criteria is going to be but the requirement for the grant is that we do a minimum of twelve visits but you can do more than that because the truck is going to be ours."

Councilman Gauff asked, "I guess my question was something that Mrs. Buckles said earlier was that we don't have any outside vendors, they are all locals and I was just wondering why is that? I know we had talked about sponsorship and getting larger to me if we are seeking to get and have a really nice Andouille Festival to grow it then we would be seeking vendors and restaurants and everything else out of the area and if so I don't know why they wouldn't be willing to come to our festival when we are trying to go to all of these other festivals and why wouldn't some of those come to our festival."

Natalie Robottom stated, "They may and we did put out letters for sponsorship at different levels so that was something that this council talked about so we did send out letters of sponsorship but we do have a lot of food vendors who regularly apply and as we said we increased the number of booths to allow more to participate. So it is growing and we are soliciting sponsors."

Councilman Snyder stated, "You know it is just like we have a concern here about how we will work the vendors at the Andouille Festival. I am thinking this may also be the question that other festivals have even though we are the Andouille capital of the world so what we are saying is that most of our products will be Andouille products?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "Not all of them but we have like crawfish bisque and there is a lot but the grant itself was seafood and Andouille but for our Andouille Festival we all know that many vendors have corn and shrimp soup because you can't have all Andouille because then you restricts someone's ability to sell. So I think Torri has a very good process and she has met with the vendors to go over and for their benefit too because if six of you are selling catfish that hurts your business so she meets with you to say we have this number of people serving this and we are looking for a variety here but there is a process in place to try to get a nice variety and also to make you aware that you know what we already have two booths with this you might want to change your menu so you are not competing with one of the groups but again she and her committee have spent a lot of time on it to try and make sure that we get a nice variety and that everybody is aware of what everybody else is providing so that if you want to alter your menu you can."

Councilman Snyder stated, "I commend Torri for jumping on this and getting us a free truck and doing this because I know she has been working really hard on it and I know that for a fact so good job."

Councilman Wilson stated, "I think it is a good idea. I am just wondering about who is going to drive this vehicle and the insurance part of it and how it is going to be handled. I think it is a good idea and I think we could do more festivals than twelve."

Natalie Robottom stated, "And insurance is part of the grant a parish employee will be with them on site. All of that is listed in the line item and budget for this grant insurance, workman's comp and all of what protects us legally was part of the grant and indicated in the budget detail."

MOTION: Councilwoman Hotard moved and Councilman Perrilloux seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to advertise for bids for The Taste of St. John Food Truck/Trailer. The motion passed unanimously.

Stacey Cador - Authorization to renew the Juvenile Probation Officers' liability insurance with Stone Oak Underwriters through Riverlands Insurance Services, Inc.

Stacey Cador, Director of Human Resources, stated, "Administration requests authorization to renew the liability insurance with Stone Oak Underwriters through Riverlands Insurance Services, Inc. for \$2,553. This amount is the same as the expiring premium and will be paid through the Juvenile Detention Fund."

MOTION: Councilman Perrilloux moved and Councilman Wright seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to renew the Juvenile Probation Officers' liability insurance with Stone Oak Underwriters through Riverlands Insurance Services, Inc. The motion passed with 7 yeas and 2 abstaining (Hotard & Millet).

Adjournment

MOTION: Councilman Snyder moved and Councilwoman Hotard seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.