

MEETING MINUTES OF 9/22/2025

Posted Thursday, September 18, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

Notice of Public Hearing

Washington Parish Council
Regular Meeting
Washington Parish Courthouse
908 Washington Street, Franklinton, La 70438
Council Chambers
Monday, September 22, 2025 @ 5:30 p.m.

Council Chairwoman Kim Wagner called the meeting to order.

Ordinance No. 25-765: Adopt an Ordinance Accepting Luna Lane as a Parish Road.

Ordinance No. 25-766: Adopt an Ordinance to Grant a Predial Servitude of Way and Passage to the Washington Parish Communication District for the Benefit of a 0.028 Acre Parcel of Land Including the Communications Tower.

Ordinance No. 25-767: Adopt an Ordinance Authorizing the Conveyance of Immovable Property Owned by the Washington Parish Government including Improvements, if Any, Being 28.228 Acres, More or Less, Located in Section 32, Township 3 South, Range 12 East in Washington Parish, Louisiana and Authorizing the Washington Parish President to Sign Any and All Documents Necessary to Accomplish This Act of Sale.

Ordinance No. 25-768: Adopt an Ordinance to Amend the 2025 Annual Operating Budget for the Washington Parish Government.

Notice of Public Meeting

Washington Parish Council
Regular Meeting
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908 Washington Street, Franklinton, La 70438
Council Chambers
Monday, September 22, 2025 @ 5:30 p.m.

AGENDA:

Item No. 1: Call to Order: Council Chairwoman Kim Wagner called the meeting to order.

Item No. 2: Invocation: The invocation was led by Councilman Branch.

Item No. 3: Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge was led by Councilman King.

Item No. 4: Roll Call: Council Clerk Jesse Applewhite called the roll. Present were Clark Harry, Steven Branch, Reginald McMasters, Carley King, Joe Culpepper, Shawn Rice, and Kim Wagner.

Item No. 5: Approval of Minutes: September 8, 2025, Regular Council Meeting.

Council Chairwoman Wagner: Would anyone from the public like to come forward and speak before the Council votes to approve the minutes? *No one came forward.*

Councilman Culpepper: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to approve the minutes from the September 8, 2025, meeting.

Councilman Harry: Second.

Council Chairwoman Wagner: I have a motion by Councilman Culpepper and a second by Councilman Harry.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (7) Harry, Branch, McMasters, King, Culpepper, Rice, Wagner

NAYS:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Item no. 6: Washington Parish Health Unit: Nursing Supervisor for the Washington Parish Health Units in both Bogalusa and Franklinton, Megan Thomas, spoke about the Health Units in our parish and the days/hours you can utilize their services. They also provide extended hours to accommodate people who are not available during regular business hours. Megan explained that the Health Unit provides services for children and adults five days a week and everyone will receive treatment, regardless of their ability to pay. The goals of our local Health Unit are to prevent illness and promote health in the community. They provide services such as vaccinations, nutrition education, and help protect against infectious diseases. The Health Unit provides access to essential health and health quality. They even prepare and respond to emergencies. Megan explained about their reproductive health program and the WIC program that is designed to support pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and children by providing healthy foods, nutrition education and breastfeeding support.

Amy Bekes, Office Manager for both Franklinton and Bogalusa Health Units, spoke about their vital records services. The health units issued 9,656 certified death certificates in 2023 and 2024. So far in 2025, they have issued 3,497 death certificates. The health units can also connect the public with information needed to obtain copies of birth certificates and assist families with in-home births with obtaining birth certificates, so all citizens of Washington Parish are properly documented. They are committed to serving the community with professionalism and care.

Ashley Guy, who works with the environmental section of the health department explained what they do and that their goal is preventing illness in the community. Ashley spoke about the 800 to 1,000 retail inspections they perform per year. She explained these inspections are done in places like schools, daycares, jails, clinics, nursing homes, food establishments, etc. Additional follow-up inspections are completed if an establishment is found to be in noncompliance and every complaint submitted to their office is always investigated. The environmental department also manages individual sewer inspections, and 9,000 sewer permits in Washington Parish. They average 500 new sewer permits per year. They also offer water samples of private wells and complete approximately 150 per year.

Item No. 7: Assessor's Board of Review for the 2025 Tax Roll:

Council Chairwoman Wagner explained that no formal tax complaints were submitted and read a letter from the Washington Parish Assessor stating assessment lists have been completed for 2025 and their books were open for inspection the required 15 days and because of exposure, there were no complaints received.

Item No. 8: Ordinance No. 25-765: Adopt an Ordinance Accepting Luna Lane as a Parish Road.

Public Works Director Alex Sumrall explained that he, along with Director of Transportation, Danny Knight, reviewed the road and observed proper drainage and that it would require minimal maintenance. He stated that they would be in agreeance with the parish adopting Luna Lane as a parish road.

Council Chairwoman Kim Wagner: Would anyone from the public like to come forward and speak before the Council votes to adopt this Ordinance? *No one came forward.*

Councilman King: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 25-765.

Councilman Rice: Second.

Council Chairwoman Wagner: I have a motion by Councilman King and a second by Councilman Rice.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (7) Harry, Branch, McMasters, King, Culpepper, Rice, Wagner

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: ()

Item No. 9: Ordinance No. 25-766: Adopt an Ordinance to Grant a Predial Servitude of Way of Passage to the Washington Parish Communication District for the benefit of a 0.028 Acre Parcel of Land Including the Communications Tower.

Parish Attorney Matt Garver: The parish is receiving a grant to make improvements to the Communications Tower. Several years ago, the tower itself was subdivided out from a larger piece of property owned by Parish Government. As part of the grant process, it is required that we certify public road access to the tower itself. When 0.028 parcel was subdivided in the past, there was no formal access reserved so we are formally giving access to it. Communications Tower is now owned by the Communications District and there is a parcel of parish property between the Communication District's land and the public road. This Ordinance will reflect formal public road access as required by this grant.

Council Chairwoman Wagner: Would anyone from the public like to speak before the Council votes to adopt this Ordinance? *No one came forward.*

Councilman Branch: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 25-766.

Councilman Harry: Second.

Council Chairwoman Wagner: I have a motion by Councilman Branch and a second by Councilman Harry.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (7) Harry, Branch, McMasters, King, Culpepper, Rice, Wagner

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: ()

Item No. 10: Ordinance No. 25-767: Adopt an Ordinance Authorizing Conveyance of Immovable Property Owned by the Washington Parish Government including Improvements, if Any, Being 28.228 Acres, More or less, Located in Section 32 Township 3 South, Range 12 East in Washington Parish, Louisiana and Authorizing the Washington Parish President to Sign Any and All Documents Necessary to Accomplish This Act o Sale.

Director of Finance/Personnel Lacy Burris: This Ordinance is regarding surplus land the parish obtained from participating in a USDA loan program. The loan was defaulted and the parish obtained ownership of the land. We recently took offers on the purchase of the land and have a prospective buyer.

Council Chairwoman Wagner: Would anyone from the public like to come forward and speak before the Council votes to adopt this Ordinance? *No one came forward.*

Councilman Culpepper: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to adopt Ordinance 25-767.

Councilman Branch: Second.

Council Chairwoman Wagner: I have a motion by Councilman Culpepper and a second by Councilman Branch.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (7) Harry, Branch, McMasters, King, Culpepper, Rice, Wagner

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: ()

Item No. 11: Ordinance No. 25-768: Adopt an Ordinance to Amend the 2025 Annual Operating Budget for the Washington Parish Government.

Lacy Burris explained that as part of the audit, one of the things the auditors look at is our budget. They want to make sure that we keep the public and the Council aware of any changes to fund balances any time we expect revenues to fall below 5% of what we budgeted for or if we expect that we will exceed our budget expenses by 5%. When this happens, we must amend the budgets. Lacy gave a detailed report on what budgets are being amended and answered all questions.

Council Chairwoman Wagner: Would anyone from the public like to come forward and speak before the council votes to adopt this Ordinance? *No one came forward.*

Councilman Rice: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 25-768.

Councilman King: Second.

Council Chairwoman Wagner: I have a motion by Councilman Rice and a second by Councilman King.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (7) Harry, Branch, McMasters, King, Culpepper, Rice, Wagner

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: ()

Item No. 12: Resolution No. 25-1422: Adopt a Resolution Removing 746 Feet of John Jones Road from the Washington Parish Road Inventory List.

Alex Sumerall explained that the land where this piece of road is located has new owners and the 746 feet of road has always been inaccessible to the parish due to a gate placed by previous owners. This Resolution would allow the parish to give this part of the road back to the owners and to be taken off the parish's inventory list.

Council Chairwoman Wagner: Would anyone from the public like to come forward and speak before the Council votes? *No one came forward.*

Councilman Culpepper: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to adopt Resolution No. 25-1422.

Councilman Branch: Second.

Council Chairwoman Wagner: I have a motion by Councilman Culpepper and a second by Councilman Branch.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (7) Harry, Branch, McMasters, King, Culpepper, Rice, Wagner

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: ()

Item no. 13: Public Participation:

Washington Parish Sheriff Jason Smith stated that the jail was recently cited by the Fire Marshal for being overcrowded and that the jail is at 106% capacity. Smith explained that the jail is currently 77 inmates above capacity of 144 inmates. The jail is housing 70 prisoners from Department of Corrections, 32 prisoners on probation holds and 8 prisoners on parole holds that shouldn't even be housed at our jail. He also explained that statistically, half of the prisoners in the State of Louisiana are being housed at local jails, thus causing overcrowded issues across the state and being a financial burden. Sheriff Smith spoke of updates for Washington Parish Courthouse security, as well as, developing more detailed comprehensive plans regarding critical incident procedures of Washington Parish Schools.

William Barse with Washington Parish Animal Control expressed some ideas for a proposed ordinance that would help solve many issues the animal control officers face such as abandonment, adequate food and water, shelter, strays, etc.

Council Chairwoman Wagner: Would anyone else from the public like to speak before the Council votes to close public participation? *No one came forward.*

Councilman King: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to close public participation.

Councilman Rice: Second.

Council Chairwoman Wagner: I have a motion by Councilman King and a second by Councilman Rice.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (7) Harry, Branch, McMasters, King, Culpepper, Rice, Wagner

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: ()

Item No. 14: President's Report:

Director of Finance/Personnel Lacy Burris: In October I will be getting with each department for the 2026 budget. A Finance Committee meeting will then be held to discuss the budget. The goal is to get the budget adopted by the end of November.

Director of Public Works Alex Sumrall gave a transportation report for Location 3 reflecting September 12, 2025 through September 19, 2025:

- Picked up 303 bags of litter on 40 parish roads
- Cut/cleared at seven locations throughout the parish including Highway 10 Memorial Park, the storage building at the courthouse, Franklinton Health Unit, Bogalusa Health Unit, and Varnado Recreation Center.

Alex also gave a report from the permit department for the month of September:

- Mobile home permits issued: 15
- Reconnection permits: 91
- BJ McNeese completed 139 inspections
- Dewitt completed 140 inspections
- Scott Dickerson completed 146 inspections

Alex gave a public works report including the completion of the conveyance department at the Washington Parish Courthouse as well as the Varnado Recreation Center and the new basketball court. The renovations at the Choctaw Landfill are complete, as well. The parish's in-house asphalt crew will be working on the Franklinton Jr. High School parking lot this week and renovations at Choctaw landfill are complete. Alex, Lacy Burris, Bobbie Jo Brealand, and Tommy Teboe have been working on RFP's through debris removal and monitoring companies.

Parish President Ryan Seal spoke of his attendance at the Hammond Town Hall meeting where committee Chairmen from around the state spoke of recent events and accomplishments including roads, education, criminal justice, and insurance. President Seal issued a parish wide burn ban on Friday September 19, 2025. He also commented on the parish road program happening now and the positive affects it is having on the community. Seal reminded everyone of the upcoming election for tax renewals.

Item No. 15: Council Discussion:

The Councilman thanked the Washington Parish Health Unit for speaking and informing everyone of all the services they provide for our parish. They also reminded everyone of the election coming up on October 11, 2025, regarding tax renewals. They informed of some upcoming events including the Bogalusa Blues and Heritage Festival, Washington Parish Fair flag raising ceremonies, and Parish Pulse meeting. The Washington Parish Free Fair is also looking for volunteers for anyone interested. The Council members thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Item No. 16: Adjourn:

Council Chairwoman Wagner: May I have a motion to adjourn?

Councilman King: I make a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Councilman McMasters: Second.

Council Chairwoman Wagner: I have a motion from Councilman King and a second by Councilman McMasters.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (7) Harry, Branch, McMasters, King, Culpepper, Rice, Wagner

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: ()

Council Chairwoman Wagner: Meeting adjourned.

Council Chairwoman, Kim Wagner
Washington Parish Council

Jesse Applewhite, Clerk
Washington Parish Council

Order of Voting
Clark Harry Joe Culpepper
Steven Branch Shawn Rice
Reginald McMasters Kim Wagner
Carley King

The next meeting will be held on October 6, 2025.

In accordance with the American Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance, please contact
Jesse Applewhite, Clerk to the Council, at 985.839.7825, describing the assistance that is
necessary.

(All Ordinances, Resolutions, and attachments in their entirety are available at the office of the
Clerk to the Council at 909 Pearl Street, Franklinton, Louisiana or at 985.839.7825, or
wpgov.org.)

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