

MEETING MINUTES OF 7/27/2026

Posted: July 23, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.

Notice of Public Meeting

Washington Parish Council
Regular Meeting
Washington Parish Courthouse
908 Washington Street, Franklinton, Louisiana 70438
Council Chambers
Monday, July 27, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

AGENDA:

Item No. 1: Call to Order: Council Chairman McMasters called the meeting to order.

Item No. 2: Invocation: The invocation was led by Parish President Ryan Seal.

Item No. 3: Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge was led by Councilwoman Kim Wagner.

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

Item No. 5: Approval of Minutes: July 13, 2026, Regular Council Meeting.

Council Chairman McMasters: Would anyone from the public like to come forward and speak before the Council votes to approve the minutes?

President Seal: There are just a couple things I noticed on the comments I made at the last meeting. On the second line, it says “Kennedy” ball field, and it should be “Plainview” ball field. Also, towards the bottom it says “I am going to share some things with you tonight. Several years ago, I think it was 2022...”, but I misspoke. It should be 2017 or 2018 and that is my fault, I did misspeak. Also, there is a line further down that says “I was walking into a health club in Baton Rouge” which needs to be changed to Bogalusa. The final thing is the line where it says, “I have never drug this ‘going green’ into it.” I believe what I said was, “I’ve never drank this ‘going green’ Kool-Aid”, if I remember correctly.

Council Chairman McMasters: We will make sure our Council Clerk updates the minutes to reflect the corrections. Would anyone else 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 approve the minutes for the July 13, 2026, Regular Council Meeting with all corrections.

Councilman Branch: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilman Culpepper and a second by Councilman Branch.

Roll call of vote as follows:

YEAS: (6) Wagner, Harry, Branch, McMasters, Culpepper, Rice

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: (1) King

Item No. 6: Resolution No. 26-1512: Adopt a Resolution by the Washington Parish Council Amending Resolution No. 26-1491 to Correct an Error Regarding the Highway Designation for the Downtown Franklinton Sidewalk Improvement Project, Segment A2

Director of Public Works Alex Sumrall: This is a Resolution for the Sidewalk Project A2 that you just spoke about. There was an error mentioning Highway 16 instead of Highway 25. This Resolution is to correct the error in Resolution No. 26-1491.

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

Councilman Branch: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-1512.

Councilman Rice: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilman Branch and a second by Councilman Rice.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (6) Wagner, Harry, Branch, McMasters, Culpepper, Rice

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: (1) King

Item No. 7: Resolution No. 26-1513: Adopt a Resolution by the Washington Parish Council Amending Resolution No. 26-1472 to Correct an Error Regarding the Highway Designation for the Downtown Franklinton Sidewalk Improvement Project, Segment A2

Director of Public Works Alex: This rolls into the previous Resolution. It is to correct the error where it states Highway 16 instead of Highway 25 in Resolution No. 26-1472.

Council Chairman McMasters: Does everyone understand? We amended a Resolution which creates a new Resolution. I just want to make sure all hearts and minds are clear on what we are doing tonight. Would anyone from the public like to come forward and speak before the Council votes? *No one came forward.*

Councilwoman Wagner: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-1513.

Councilman Harry: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilwoman Wagner and a second by Councilman Harry.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (6) Wagner, Harry, Branch, McMasters, Culpepper, Rice

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: (1) King

Item No. 8: Resolution No. 26-1514 : Adopt a Resolution Reappointing Bradley Cooper to the Washington Parish Fire Protection District No. 1 Board of Directors

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

Councilman Branch: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to adopt Resolution no. 26-1514.

Councilwoman Wagner: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilman Branch and a second by Councilwoman Wagner.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (6) Wagner, Harry, Branch, McMasters, Culpepper, Rice

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: (1) King

Item No. 9: Resolution No. 26-1515: Adopt a Resolution Reappointing John Seal to the Washington Parish Fire Protection District No. 1 Board of Directors.

Council Chairman McMasters: Would anyone like to come forward and speak before the Council votes? *No one came forward.*

Councilwoman Wagner: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-1515.

Councilman Rice: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilwoman Wagner and a second by Councilman Rice.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (6) Wagner, Harry, Branch, McMasters, Culpepper, Rice

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: (1) King

Item No. 10: Resolution No. 26-1516: Adopt a Resolution Reappointing Stuart Varnado to the Washington Parish Fire Protection District No. 1 Board of Directors

Council Chairman McMasters: 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. 26-1516.

Councilman Rice: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilman Culpepper and a second by Councilman Rice.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (6) Wagner, Harry, Branch, McMasters, Culpepper, Rice

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: (1) King

Item No. 11: Resolution No. 26-1517: Adopt a Resolution to Appoint Keith Dellsperger to the Washington Parish Fire Protection District No. 1 Board of Directors

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

Councilman Branch: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-1517.

Councilman Harry: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilman Branch and a second by Councilman Harry.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (6) Wagner, Harry, Branch, McMasters, Culpepper, Rice

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: (1) King

Item No. 12: Resolution No. 26-1518: Adopt a Resolution Reappointing Shaunna Freeman to the Washington Parish Fire Protection District No. 9 Board of Directors

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

Councilman Rice: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-1518.

Councilman Branch: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilman Rice and a second by Councilman Branch.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (6) Wagner, Harry, Branch, McMasters, Culpepper, Rice

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: (1) King

Item No. 13: Resolution No. 26-1519: Adopt a Resolution Reappointing Jon Pinell to the Washington Parish Fire Protection District No. 9 Board of Directors.

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

Councilman Branch: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-1519.

Councilwoman Wagner: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilman Branch and a second by Councilwoman Wagner.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (6) Wagner, Harry, Branch, McMasters, Culpepper, Rice

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: (1) King

Item No. 14: Resolution No. 26-1520: Adopt a Resolution to Appoint Tracy Verret to the Washington Parish Fire Protection District No. 9 Board of Directors

Council Chairman McMasters: 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. 26-1520.

Councilman Harry: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilman Culpepper and a second by Councilman Harry.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (6) Wagner, Harry, Branch, McMasters, Culpepper, Rice

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: (1) King

Item No. 15: Resolution No. 26-1521: Adopt a Resolution to Declare Surplus and/or Scrap Movable Property and Authorization to Dispose of Same

Director of Public Works Alex: This is equipment that is no longer usable or valuable to the Parish Government. We are looking to possibly get a couple of pick-up trucks with the return we get from these items at Henderson Auction. If it doesn't sell there, we will scrap it.

Councilman McMasters: Would anyone like to come forward and speak before the Council votes? *No one came forward.*

Councilman Branch: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to adopt Resolution no. 26-1521.

Councilwoman Wagner: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilman Branch and a second by Councilwoman Wagner.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (6) Wagner, Harry, Branch, McMasters, Culpepper, Rice

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: (1) King

Item No. 16: Public Participation:

Council Chairman McMasters: We will have our public participation at this time. The Council will allow you five minutes only. We have a timer now and you will hear a buzzer when your five minutes is up. From the Chairman standpoint, I ask that you keep it as professional as possible. We do not want this to get out of hand. When you come up to the podium, state your name and address for the record and we will start your five minutes after.

David Anthony of Mt. Hermon: I am here today to read to you all the minutes from the Infrastructure Committee meeting dated July 9, 2018, a meeting in which I was the Chairman but had to miss due to some reasons everyone knows. The meeting was called to order; discussion of old business was done. Under Item No. 6, was new business. Chairman Talley said, "We do have Mr. Ryan Seal here tonight and asked if he could pass a Resolution of the Washington Parish Council approving Iris Solar, LLC for participation in the Louisiana Industrial Tax Exemption Program." Ryan Seal, Executive Director of Washington Parish Economic Development Foundation said, "Through my work, we have been working on this project that involves a solar power manufacturing facility in Washington Parish. I have Mr. Will Ferguson with a company out of Austin, Texas and Mr. Jimmy Leonard, a CPA out of Baton Rouge. This company wants to lease approximately 440 acres from the LSU Experiment Station on Hwy 16, as you know the Experiment Station has had their share of cuts over the years. This could go a long way to make sure we can continue to have that for long time to come. They use 440 acres using state of the art equipment that runs approximately \$75,000,000 in investments. They make these solar panels tilt in the sun and take the energy harvest from the sun and put it into a power grid and sell it to whoever wants to buy it, like Entergy, Cleco, WST or anyone else. This project would like to start by the end of the year and create around 200 construction jobs to build it and once the project gets completed, there won't be that many people working out there. This project does not make noise or create traffic once it is built. It will go a long way to provide more things for our parish. The reason for coming here tonight is they would like to take advantage of the Industrial Property Tax Exemption. They do qualify for a 5-year 100% Property Tax Exemption and 3-years at 80%. Our Parish Government has gotten zero taxes from this property." Councilman McMasters asked a question. Ryan Seal: "Well there is no guarantees in business, but I will say this, this is a contract. If they don't fulfill their contract, then we don't fulfill ours and then all bets are off. This is a two-way street." Parish President Thomas: "Will this company do its own general contracting?" Will Ferguson: "We will hire a contractor specializing in solar construction." President Thomas: "We just had another deal working with another company, and sometimes they don't really fulfill what they are presenting." Ryan Seal: "This will go a long way to save the Experiment Station. These are not tall projects, and you will never know they are there. It is a great project. It is not a done deal, and we are still working in this direction. What we are asking for and what we are giving is certainly a fair balance for our parish long term. From the beginning of time, our parish has not gotten any taxes from the property because it is owned by the state. We can continue to get no taxes, or we can get some taxes." Councilman Workman made a motion to add the Resolution to the Council agenda. Councilman McMasters seconded the motion. All approved.

Gary Parker of Bogalusa: I have lived in Lee's Creek almost my entire life. I was born and raised in Bogalusa and have lived there since 1949. I am 75 years old and a retired Electrician from the Paper Mill. I am reaching out to you for much needed assistance with a very dangerous situation that we have all been living with for the past 75 years. In 1949, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built a 26-mile-long Pearl River Navigation Canal that begins at the Pearl River and Poole's Bluff in Washington Parish and runs South through St. Tammany Parish. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers installed a low-head dam that spans the full width of the Pearl River at

Poole's Bluff. This closed all safe navigation on the Pearl River. The low-head dam has claimed many lives and caused many near-death close calls for 75 years. There is no safe way over or around the low-head dam. Therefore, we have had no safe access to the Pearl River below the dam since 1949. There are many miles of river recreation that we are not allowed to use. There are U.S. Army Corps of Engineers signs that say, "Restricted. No boats beyond this sign." Many thousands of acres of public wildlife management areas, the Bogalusa Wildlife Refuge, and private properties do not have safe access to the river. We love our Pearl River Navigation Canal because it is a highly used fishing area. The U.S. Corps of Engineers abandoned the canal, and we have to depend on it for recreation since 1949. We don't want to lose the canal. We need a bridge built across the canal at Poole's Bluff, a parking lot on the east side of the bridge, and a boat launch on the Louisiana downstream side of the low-head dam. There is enough space to keep a boat launch a safe distance below the dam. We need your help with this request. Your consideration of this matter and assistance would be greatly appreciated. We have had to live with this terrible problem since 1949, far too long. The low-head dam has a nickname, "The Killing Machine." I know we spend a lot of money on recreation. That Bogalusa State Park out there cost about six million. I remember big names on bicycle trails and a bridge across the creek at Mile Branch. These aren't real expensive items, as long as they're safe. President Trump even wrote a new bill this year that there was going to be safer, better access to all the national properties and wildlife refuges. There are different ideas for the canal besides a bridge. You can put an earthen dam, a road across it. We can put a substation with an electric motor to pump clean water in it. It doesn't have to pump muddy water, and after we'll have to dig sand back out. That would eliminate that.

Ben Sarro of Franklinton: We heard Mr. Anthony read the minutes of that Infrastructure meeting. I'd like to expand on that a little. That was July 9, 2018, not 2022. Resolution No. 18-867 was motioned to be added to the upcoming Parish Council agenda. The Resolution was not offered as an introduction. This was something important. It was offered as a voting item for the next Council meeting. There was no time for the public to respond properly. There was no time for the public to even know about it. It just got voted in. As President Seal's remarks made on July 13th, he says, "You can't force something through. You put it on the agenda; it stays there for two weeks. It's voted on. It's public." It appears this was not the case for Resolution No. 18-867. Chairman Talley's call for public participation during that meeting was weak and futile. There was no one there. Per the minutes of that meeting, President Seal, then Executive Director of Washington Parish Economic Development Foundation stated, "Through my work, we have been working on this project involving a solar power manufacturing facility in Washington Parish." President Seal is correct. In the strictest definition, he did not recruit any solar power manufacturing facility to come to New Orleans. He can say it was his job to present the project. It is his job to sell it to the Council. In this case, let's simply substitute orchestration for recruit. Through Mr. Workman's efforts, the Council approved the ITEP exemption for the solar company, and it was obtained. By the words of the representatives there, Mr. Will Ferguson and Mr. Jimmy Leonard, they needed that approval for their application to go through the Louisiana Department of Economic Development and from there it goes to the Board of Commerce and Industry, which reviews local Resolution, a letter from the Sheriff, and their Exhibit A, which is a contract. Then they make a determination. If they approve, then it goes to the Governor for his approval and execution. They did not want to wait the two weeks. From all of this, what is determined is that without the ITEP approval that Councilman Workman obtained, it's quite possible the Iris Project would not have become a reality. We saw an example of this when the Bogalusa West Solar Facility did not happen because concerned citizens made their objections to the Council and the ITEP application was rejected. What did they do? They pulled up the stakes and left. Concerned citizens had the opportunity to object. We were not given that opportunity for the Resolution regarding ITEP for Iris. In the case of that Resolution, it went through. Hardly anyone knew about it. Executives said their Bogalusa West Solar Farm could not sell their power at a competitive price without the ITEP tax break. That doesn't sound like a good business model to me. The supposed local jobs for both Iris and Sunlight, as far as we are able to ascertain, did not happen. They imported their workers. I know this because the director for that project came to our church and asked us to bake Christmas cookies for those men because they weren't going home. The President's comments from that Infrastructure Committee meeting stated, "These are not tall projects, and you will never know that they are there." That is not the truth. Everyone that travels on Highway 16 sees acres of ugly square panels. What was once rolling hills of pasture that are part of the culture of this parish turned out to be a wasteland so to speak. Here's the thing I have thought about through all of this; all of this is civil action. There is no criminality attached to it. If those people decide they can't make a profit, they pull up the stakes and leave. They

don't have to clean up after themselves. Of course, we are allowed to sue them for that if we want to go to court for years and years and spend a lot of money. The projects and Sunlight may not have ever happened if Iris didn't happen. In all of that, we lost all because the public didn't have a chance to speak.

Nick Smith of Franklinton: I am sorry I missed the last meeting. I had to attend a Farm Bureau meeting where I serve as a board member. I didn't realize the last meeting would get as emotional as it did. I've been thinking about the difference between being factual and being truthful. Facts can tell you what happened. Truth tells the whole story. Think of it this way. Facts are like looking at a single photograph. Truth is watching the entire video. A photograph may be completely authentic, but the video reveals what really happened. We see this in politics all the time. The same principle applies here. It's factual to say that the former Executive Director of the Washington Parish Economic Development Foundation didn't bring solar projects to Washington Parish because he simply did not call solar companies and invite them here. But it is not truthful to suggest that he opposed these projects. We know at the meeting where the Council voted on the ITEP exemption, he worked to amend the agenda at the last minute to avoid following the very procedure that he had previously advocated. The truth is that he was, and still is, in a position to support these projects. Instead of being open and transparent, he has continued to blur the issues and work behind the scenes to make deals without involving the Parish Council. The real issue isn't whether the Parish President called me names. I'm just a citizen whose tax dollars help pay his salary. If he wants to make it personal, that's his choice, but everyone else and I in the parish have every right to ask questions about the projects that will affect our community for decades to come. We have every right to expect our elected officials to answer these questions honestly, openly, and without becoming defensive. I'm entitled to ask what good an Economic Development Director or a Parish President is if they refuse to lead on issues that matter. Most of all, I'm entitled to expect our public officials to be truthful, not merely factual. Washington Parish doesn't need leaders who are more concerned with winning arguments or calling people names. We need leaders who are willing to tell the whole truth, answer difficult questions, and focus on getting things done.

Shelly Thomas of Bogalusa: These are not my words, but of a very passionate community member. "We, the people of Washington Parish, wish to be heard. Nobody is ever going to convince the average person that a solar farm with backup battery storage, a data center, or carbon capture facility belong in the middle of a rural parish. Not after what we have seen in neighboring parishes, communities across the country are now experiencing, and certainly not when building one will require rural, agricultural or residential land to be consumed for industrial use. At this point, the argument is no longer simply misguided, its preposterous. Notice what is almost always missing from the sales pitch. The conversation is rarely about preserving farmland, protecting rural communities, respecting the comprehensive plan, or safeguarding what residents were promised. It's about tax revenue, investment, and money. Money matters, but it cannot be the only measure of a good decision. Land is more than a line on a map. It carries the history of the people who cared for it, the character of the community surrounding it, and the responsibility we have to those who will inherit it. That is the part supporters of these projects rarely want to discuss honestly. The developer collects the approval. The landowner may collect a substantial check. The parish is promised new tax revenue, but the surrounding community is left to absorb permanent consequences. Residents live with transmission lines, substations, backup generation, road impacts, noise, water concerns, lost views, and the gradual industrialization of places that were never intended to carry that burden. The financial benefits are concentrated. The consequences are spread across everyone else. Once the parish approves taking rural land for industrial use, it becomes harder to argue that the next property should remain protected. Just one approval becomes a justification for another and then another until the rural character everyone claims to value survives only in old photographs and campaign literature. So here is the question every elected official should be required to answer plainly. What are you actually willing to preserve? Not in speeches, not in campaign mailers, not in carefully worded promises about balanced growth. Where is the line you will not cross? If rural land can be compromised whenever the tax projections are large enough, then preservation is not principle, it's a slogan. If a comprehensive plan can be set aside whenever a developer presents a lucrative proposal, then it is not a plan, it is a suggestion. Leadership means deciding that some places are worth protecting, even when there is money on the table. It means having the discipline to say that not every project belongs everywhere, and that a rural parish should not have to sacrifice its identity to prove it is open for business. This matters because these decisions are often made long before most residents realize what is happening. By the time the clearing

begins, the public hearings are over, the permit is issued, and the promises have already been accepted. This is why our residents cannot wait until a project is proposed next to their own neighborhood, farm, or community. Every permit creates a precedent. Every exception weakens the next argument for preservation. Every approval moves the line a little farther. Protecting rural land requires more than saying we love it. It requires showing up, reading the applications, and questioning the numbers. It is about putting industrial development where industrial development belongs and refusing to sacrifice irreplaceable land simply because someone has attached a large dollar figure to it. We had better make certain that we leave behind a legacy worth inheriting because once rural land is compromised, cleared, and industrialized, the money may be spent, but the land does not come back. The next generation will not judge us by the tax revenue we were promised.”

John Brown of Franklinton: I understand a few days ago there was a meeting with the Economic Development lady. That’s wrong. It was a meeting with a couple of people from our group. We are here as a group and want to be addressed as a group.

Tim Tackett of Bogalusa: My wife and I recently moved to Washington Parish. We bought our land about five years ago. We moved here two years ago in January of 2024. Part of the reason we moved to Washington Parish was because of the rural lifestyle that is present here, because of the wooded areas, all the wildlife, the streams, the rivers and the beauty that is present. I spent 42 years in commercial nuclear power. I am very familiar with electrical generation, power distribution, design, solar and wind. I spent 22 years in construction engineering, maintenance engineering, and project management for the last 20 years. In commercial nuclear power is one of the most highly regulated industries. I applaud you for taking the time to put the pause into effect to review your current Ordinance. I have reviewed that Ordinance, and I would say that it needs updating. One of the things in nuclear power that was critical and of utmost importance in everything that we did was the protection of the public’s health and safety. You, as our elected officials, have a similar responsibility to the residents of Washington Parish. That for any project that comes in, you must weigh the benefits against the detriment to the residents themselves.

Jim Adams of Bogalusa: I have addressed this Council many times before. I served on various commissions for 14 years. The residents of Washington Parish do not want another solar farm. We need jobs in our parish, but this will not provide jobs for our parish. In this type of solar farm, one single cell out of the thousands of cells that are in one of those battery farms catches on fire, it will create a fire that will burn the solar cell at 2,000 degrees. It will catch the others on fire that will burn at 10,000 degrees.

Council Chairman McMasters: On behalf of the Council and elected officials, we have a tough job over here. Our job is to also protect the landowner.

Nickey Smith of Franklinton spoke about the Council not approving the recent cell tower proposal in Franklinton.

Council Chairman McMasters: We have a job to do, and we must figure out what is the best way and the legal way for our citizens. This is the reason for the Moratorium. We are doing all we can do. We are figuring out how we can strengthen our solar ordinance. The moratorium slows everything down and puts a stop to solar until we have revised our ordinance. We want to make sure that we make a decision that it is based on our citizens and what’s right for Washington Parish.

Kerry Nobles of Bogalusa asked about the different solar companies and projects and their location in the parish.

Council Chairman McMasters and the Council explained the different solar projects and their location.

Council Chairman McMasters: Would anyone else like to come forward and speak before the Council votes to close public participation? *No one came forward.*

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

Councilwoman Wagner: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilman Branch and a second by Councilwoman Wagner.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (6) Wagner, Harry, Branch, McMasters, Culpepper, Rice

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: (1) King.

Item No. 17: President's Report:

Director of Finance/Personnel Lacy Burris: I have a financial report. This is our budget to actual year to date through June 30th for our major funds. We are happy the way the year has gone. As for our revenue, we were 44.85% of budget. For expenses, were up to 36% of budget. Our revenues lag a little bit, but our expenses lag more so that's a good position to be in. For the year, we have a surplus across all our major funds, total of \$959,000 and total ending fund balance of 19.84 million. Of that, 19.84 million, 60% of it is allocated to the landfill and transportation fund so those are restricted. Only about 7% rests in the general fund which is unrestricted.

Parish President Ryan Seal: I had the opportunity to attend the National Association of Counties Conference in New Orleans. It is an organization with people, elected officials, and employees of counties and parishes across the United States. You get to talk to a lot of people in the same business that we're in and have a lot of the same concerns, especially across rural America. That includes jails, mental health problems filling up the jails, and healthcare in the jails. We also talked about the price of infrastructure and the cost of doing business now. Everything from fuel to maintaining quality employees. Also, the data centers were a big deal, and I watched some presentations on that as well which were really eye opening. I also had the opportunity to attend the street dedication to Delara Jack Hicks who was the widow of Robert Bob Hicks. They were two civil rights icons in Bogalusa and in Washington Parish in the 1960's. The Council on Aging opened their fifth eating site in Washington Parish in the Mt. Hermon community.

Item No. 18: Council Discussion:

Councilman Culpepper: I appreciate everyone coming out and being engaged in what's going on in your community. These discussions open a lot of eyes about a lot of different things, so thank you again for coming.

Councilman Branch spoke of the Washington Parish Schools starting soon and for everyone to be mindful of children getting to and from school.

Councilwoman Wagner: I thank everyone for coming out and for your community involvement. You can call us anytime with any questions you may have. I appreciate the feedback and factual information, too.

Council Chairman McMasters: We appreciate all of your comments concerns. Being an elected official is not an easy job, and we try to take the concerns of the public. Sometimes there are some things that we can do that are legal, some things that are not. We will keep doing the best job we can. Thank you everyone for coming out to the meeting tonight. Our next meeting will be August 10, 2026.

Item No. 19: Adjourn:

Council Chairman McMasters: May I have a motion to adjourn?

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

Councilman Branch: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilman Rice and a second by Councilman Branch.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (6) Wagner, Harry, Branch, McMasters, Culpepper, Rice

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: (1) King

Council Chairman McMasters: Meeting adjourned.

Reginald McMasters, Chairman
Washington Parish Council

Jesse Applewhite, Clerk
Washington Parish Council

Order of Voting

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

The next meeting will be held August 10, 2026.

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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