

State accepting public comments on APA 20

The state Office of Community Development (OCD) is accepting public comments on Action Plan Amendment 20.

The purpose of APA 20 is to reduce the Community Development Block Grant allocations of several programs, using those funds to increase the budget for the Middle Market Loan program.

The increase to the Middle Market Loan program is intended to provide more gap assistance for construction that will continue to benefit low to moderate income renters. This amendment will further clarify the administration and distribution of funds for the Pecan Acres Resettlement Program, the High-Risk Community subset of the Solution 4 Restore Louisiana Homeowner Assistance Program.

The action plan and the ability to submit public comments are available on the OCD website.

This APA is considered substantial, as it involves the re-allocation of more than \$5 million or a re-allocation which constitutes a change of 15 percent or greater of a program budget.

This amendment also results in a change in program benefits.

The formal public comment period for APA 20 will end at 5 p.m. on Jan. 26.

At the end of the formal public comment period, the state will submit APA 20 to Housing and Urban Development for approval.

Members of the public can submit comment by emailing ocd@la.gov, mailing to Disaster Recovery Unit, P.O. Box 94095, 70804-9095 or faxing them to the attention of Janice Lovett at 225-219-9605.

Highway Safety Commission reports spike in traffic deaths

In 2021, there were 315 fatal crashes in Louisiana that involved at least one driver who had been drinking, according to data from the Center for Analytics and Research in Transportation Safety (CARTS) at Louisiana State University.

That number accounted for the most alcohol-related crashes reported in 13 years.

“Since the pandemic, we have seen an alarming increase in traffic deaths, mostly because of driver behavior,” said Lisa Freeman, executive director of the Louisiana Highway Commission. “Speeding, distractions, impaired driving—these are the leading causes of crashes, and they are a direct result of poor decision-making by drivers.”

CARTS records also show people used mobile phones while they were driving and caused 850 crashes that injured or killed someone.

That number was the highest it has ever been in Louisiana and officials have repeatedly said those numbers were likely low because drivers in crashes are not likely to self-report mobile phone usage just before the crash.

“Distracted driving is one of those things in which people believe that everyone else is the problem,” Freeman said. “It doesn’t matter how good a driver actually is. If drivers are looking at or handling their phones while driving, they cease to be good drivers and that’s how crashes happen.”

While not strictly a driver behavior, the lack of seat belt usage continues to be a major contributor to injuries and deaths in crashes. Last year, 52.8 percent of all people who died in crashes either were not wearing a seat belt or were not wearing it properly.

“Just having good driving habits on your mind is key to being a better driver,” Freeman said.

“We too often take driving for granted, as though it were an automated task. By focusing on our driving, we are more aware of what’s going on around us and help contribute to a safer Louisiana.”

ACCUSES

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you did not have the authority doing. What I am calling now is malfeasance.”

According to the Lawrason Act, “The express or implicit authorization of the board is required for all public expenditures.”

According to the Louisiana statute 33:1891 through 1892, “The governing body of any municipality shall have authority to grant merit awards to full-time permanent employees of the municipality in accordance with the provisions of this Part. Nothing herein shall be in conflict with Civil Service rules and regulations. Prior to the granting of any awards, the governing body (Town Council) may formulate, adopt, establish, and maintain a plan to encourage and reward unusual and meritorious suggestions, actions, procedures, and accomplishments by its employees, which promote economy and efficiency in the performance of any function of the municipal government. The plan shall be reduced to writing and may be made available for inspection to all municipal employees.”

The Louisiana Ethics Commission goes further explaining gifts. According to Ethics’ statute, “No public servants shall solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, any thing of economic value as a gift or gratuity from any person or from any officer, director, agent, or employee of such person, if such public servant knows or reasonably should know that such person: Conducts operations or activities which are regulated by the public employee’s agency.”

Aiding in her decision to spend the funds, Wallace contacted J. Walker & Company of Lake Charles, Winnsboro’s auditors, to see if the merit awards were legal and the appropriate way to fund them.

“We talked with our auditor, and I made sure I was covered in this,” Wallace said. “The way they told us to do it was through a merit award not a Christmas gift. These people have been working for the Town of Winnsboro for years. They have never received any kind of merit award for anything they have done. They deserve it.”

Wallace went on to explain merit awards were bankrolled from money saved from the lack of overtime.

“Last year, our overtime for our public works were \$12,500,” Wallace said. “We have not spent any in overtime. I didn’t make the town broke with these merit awards. I made sure the auditors were with us every step in the way.”

In an e-mail provided to *The Franklin Sun* on Dec. 29, Jonald Walker with J. Walker & Company, wrote: “It is my understanding (from our discussions) that funds for the appreciation gifts were available in two manners: The sale of surplus assets and employee/personnel cost centers which has been budgeted. In my view, based upon the total dollar amount of the transaction this transaction would be considered a normal operating expense in the general course of business for the town and therefore wouldn’t require prior authorization from the council to purchase.”

During the discussion, Town Clerk Julia Jackson referred to Louisiana statute 33:1893 which stated: “Awards may be in cash or in the form of corporeal movables. An award in cash shall be for a sum not in excess of two thousand dollars. An award in the form of a corporeal movable shall have a fair market value not greater than twelve hundred dollars.”

But McCarthy questioned Jackson, “Does the mayor have to have the consent from this council to pass the merit system?”

Wallace answered McCarthy’s question by saying the next time employees were up for a merit award she would bring a resolution before Town Council members but asked “Are you against them having a merit award?”

Town Council member Jerry Johnson answered, “It is not whether the council is against it. I think all of these employees deserve it. But there is a certain way to do it.”

McCarthy added, “Mayor, we got a problem right now. You have stepped over your boundaries.”

FESTIVAL

Continued from Page 1A

not putting the cart in front of the horse. This is the cart.”

McCarthy, after hearing about the grant, remained worried about how Winnsboro would pay for the festival if bills remained after sponsorship money was spent.

“I’m just worried about this because we are doing this quick,” McCarthy said. “And if we don’t get the grant, that puts the city on the hook. Folks are going to have to be paid. My deal is to make sure the city is not left holding the bag on this one.”

Wallace answered, saying, “We are working on this. This is the mayor’s stuff. I’m handling this.”

Town Council member Jerry Johnson interjected that councilmen seemed to be left out in many of the decisions, and Wallace appeared to be doing everything herself.

“We are not doubting what you have done for the Town of Winnsboro since you have been in office,” Johnson said. “But, it seems like every Town Council meeting it is what you have done. Now, you have five town councilmen sitting up here that have to run the town also and it is not a one-man show. It is the whole Town Council and you. You need to be careful saying ‘I do this.’ ‘I’ will get you in trouble.”

The mayor countered by saying, “Well tell me what you have done. If you can tell me what you have done then I will say we. Right now it is I. It is me and these people.” She instructed town employees to stand up.

Quietly, Johnson accused Wallace of being “childish.”

“I’m not trying to say I,” Wallace said. “It is just what it is. Nobody knows who y’all are in the community because y’all don’t get out.”

“Be mindful what you say,” McCarthy said loudly. “People know who I am. I’ve been here a long time.”

Eventually, Town Council member Eddie Dunn made the motion to go forward in applying for the grant. The motion was seconded by Town Council member Marteze Singleton. Town Council member Dorothy Swayzer was absent from the meeting.

McCarthy voted for the motion while Johnson cast the lone nay vote.

“Rex, Jerry we would love to have you on the planning team,” Jayne Pierce, festival organizer who gave an update on planning, said. “You are obviously very passionate about this. We would absolutely love to have your expertise and your ideas. Let me know if you are available. We can schedule meetings around your availability.”

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NOTICE

The Franklin Parish School Board will be taking sealed bids for Intercom System and Clock Replacement for Franklin Parish School District schools. The deadline for submitting bids will be Wednesday, January 11, 2023 at 12:00 noon. Bids will be opened on Wednesday, January 11, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. at the Franklin Parish School Board Office, 7293 Prairie Road, Winnsboro, LA 71295.

Bids must be sealed and clearly marked, “Intercom System Replacement for FPSB Schools.”

Bid specifications are available at the Franklin Parish School Board. For additional information and specifications on supplies, please contact, Doug Clark, at the Franklin Parish School Board, (318) 435-9046.

The Franklin Parish School Board has the right to accept or reject any and all bids.

12/14,12/21,12/28,1/4

NOTICE

The Franklin Parish School Board will be taking sealed bids for the following air conditioners:

14,000 BTU PTAC heat/cool floor unit

12,000 BTU Mobile Cool Only Unit W/Window Vent Kit

The deadline for submitting bids will be Wednesday, January 10, 2023 at 12:00 Noon. Bids will be opened on Wednesday, January 10, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. at the Franklin Parish School Board Office, 7293 Prairie Road, Winnsboro, LA 71295.

Bids must be sealed and clearly marked, “2023 AIR CONDITIONERS.”

Bid forms are available at the Franklin Parish School Board. For additional information and specifications on supplies, please contact the Franklin Parish School Board, (318) 435-9046.

The Franklin Parish School Board has the right to accept or reject any and all bids.

SPECIFICATIONS

Window Unit: 208/230V AC, 30 AMP Power cord, plug type (NEMA) 6-30p, EER Rating 9.4,

CEER Rating 9.4, Remote control, 24,700 – 25,000 BTU cooling, 13,000 – 16,000 BTU Heating

Floor Unit: PTAC 15,000 BTU cooling with 5K 17,000 BTU electric heat, EER is 10, 208/230 volts,

6 amp, 1480 watts, Depth 21 inches, height 16 inches and width is 42 inches. Power cord with 3 prong grounding plug.

Mobile Unit: Sea Breeze 12,000 BTU Cool Unit Only Mobile AC Unit with Widow vent Kit.

12/21,12/28,1/4

NOTICE

The Franklin Parish School Board will be taking sealed bids for Janitorial Supplies. The deadline for submitting bids will be Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 12:00 PM. Bids will be opened on Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 2:30 PM. at the Franklin Parish School Board Office, 7293 Prairie Road, Winnsboro, LA 71295.

Bids must be sealed and clearly marked, “2023 SPRING JANITORIAL SUPPLIES.”

Bid forms are available at the Franklin Parish School Board. For additional information and specifications on supplies, please contact the Franklin Parish School Board, (318) 435-9046.

The Franklin Parish School Board has the right to accept or reject any and all bids.

12/21,12/28,1/4

NOTICE

Anyone knowing the whereabouts of Columbus Gregory or the heirs of Columbus Gregory, please contact the office of Michael R. Ellington, Attorney at Law, 6658 Kinloch Street, Winnsboro, LA 71295, (318)-367-0799, or via email mrellingtonlaw@gmail.com.

12/28,1/4

NOTICE

Anyone knowing the whereabouts of UNKNOWN FATHER of child born to Kara Ford on July 5, 2022, please contact the office of E. Micah Hoggatt, Hoggatt Law, LLC, 6658 Kinloch Street, Winnsboro, LA 71295. (318) 367-5252.

12/28,1/4

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