



TOWN OF BENTON

WORK SESSION MINUTES

**MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMAN
105 SIBLEY ST., BENTON, LA
TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2026, 7:00 PM**

The Town of Benton met in a Workshop on the 4th day of August at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers Benton Town Hall, 105 Sibley Street, Benton, Louisiana. Mayor James Friday called the meeting to order and called the roll with all members as follows:

Alderman Jackie Carr	ABSENT (no call/no show)
Alderman Tiffany Manning	ABSENT (no call/no show)
Alderman Tammy Brunson	PRESENT
Alderman Arshundae Perry	ABSENT (sick)
Alderman Terry Lawrence	PRESENT

Others present included Attorney Joel Murphy, Andy Modica, Brad Zagone, Matthew Marshall and Todd Hollenshead and members of the public.

A motion was made by Alderman Lawrence and seconded by Alderman Brunson to approve the work session agenda.

WORK SESSION ITEM: CYPRESS BLACK BAYOU BOARD APPOINTMENT: Meeting and interviewing candidates. Mayor Friday began by reading an email he received from Candidate Bruce Arnold prior to the work session.

“Please withdraw my name as a candidate for the CBB board member position. I had applied for the Bossier Parish School Board position when Jerry Fowler retired and was told by someone in the know that the fix was already in for an individual, but I applied anyway and it was true, that person was chosen. It appears the same thing is happening with the Town of Benton board position, so I am not going to waste my time”.

Bruce Arnold

Summarizing, the Mayor reminded those in attendance that (before July’s council meeting) he had carefully gone over each of the six resumes to make his best recommendation, which was Todd Hollenshead. It was then brought to his attention that Gary Wyche, ‘who he couldn’t believe would do something like this’, made calls to several people and even delivered a handwritten note to Alderman Manning, which she posted on Facebook, that read:

“FYI Hollenshead is being pushed by M. Collier who is also pushing the mayor. Cypress Board doesn’t need a puppet of M. Collier on the Board. Collier has also contacted the Pres. of the Board and told him Hollenshead will be appointed by your council as recommended by the mayor”.

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Mayor wrapped up by assuring he had not been influenced by anyone. All six that applied were very qualified. He then proceeded to ask the candidates to stand, be recognized and introduce themselves. This included Brad Zagone, Matthew Marshall, Andy Modica, and Todd Hollenshead. Not in attendance was Bruce Arnold- who withdrew and Ross Adams-who was on vacation. He invited the two Aldermen to ask any questions. Because Mr. Hollenshead had already answered at the last council meeting, Mr. Lawrence asked the other candidates what their intentions and goals were and how they could benefit the Board.

Andy Modica spoke first. His points included:

- Resides on lake for seven years
- Involved with Friends of Cypress Lake and exposing corruption and fraud with a previous board.
- Retired teacher and coach for 33 years
- Active Constable
- Sits on two boards-Board of Adjusters for MPC and Keep Bossier Beautiful

“I just want to serve the public...and would love to be on a board that actually has to do with my property and the lake...I am a transparent person. I believe in integrity and character is what you should go by when you shake a man’s hand. You shake it and you look him in the eye and that’s all you need. OK, and that’s where I am. So, I’m not going to be pulling strings or doing anything like that. I just want to keep the board transparent to the lake owners and to the tax entity...The CBB Board does not have an entity looking over them. They do not have someone in charge of making sure they’re doing things right and I want to be that person. And they don’t have walking quorums like they’ve had in the past and they don’t do the bidding of anyone on that lake. So that’s why I’m doing this. That’s why I want \$40 a month”.

Brad Zagone spoke second. His points included:

- Retired Bossier Fire Chief 15 of 32 years
- Resides on lake for two years
- Experience managing EMS budgets, permits and inspections along with building maintenance
- Wants to continue to support ‘what a great lake Cypress is and a great place to go’

Matthew Marshall spoke third. His points included:

- Works in Civil Service
- Resides on the lake for 9 years
- Retired Air Force 25 years-Chief Master Sargent E9
- Stated, “I pride myself, on that in my job in the military, is a lot of policy, a lot of budget, a lot of just honestly communication with people in the job. So, I think that’s what I can bring...”
- Specific concerns included--Publicity: getting the message out to what the lake is and what it offers
- Water quality challenges

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- Conservation: Staying within the scope of what's good for the environment, asking what we are doing to take care of the lake and ensuring it will be here for generations?
- Recreation: Keep fishing, boating, fireworks, events going within the scope of what's good for the environment, park, people and community
- "I pride myself on being a communicator, a listener to what people want and then advocating for that...it should not be about one person or a certain party. It should be about what's best for the community and what is best for the water district".

After calling for any questions from council, the Mayor requested that whoever got the job, they be available to report back to the board quarterly. He reminded them they were our representative and we needed to know what was going on there.

Atty Murphy acknowledged that Todd Hollenshead had previously been interviewed by council during the July council meeting but wanted to ask him if still worked full time and follow up on a few questions.

Todd Hollenshead spoke fourth. His points included:

- Works full time but with a lot of flexibility and no problems making other meetings he is involved with.
- Stressed the importance of not seeing crowds at the park anymore and emphasized making it affordable for families to go in with regard to the \$5 entry fee despite the taxes we already pay.
- "My time is not an issue. I'm pretty quick study on budgets...I'll make the meetings and be involved".

Atty Murphy added he had more questions for the other three candidates as well. Directed to Mr. Zagone, addressing the rumor regarding 'subterfuge' and 'machinations' for the appointment of Mr. Hollenshead. Atty stated, "There is also a rumor going around that the current president of that commission, Rodney Madden wants you and is trying to push for you. I'm asking you. I know it's a rumor; I don't know for a fact. That's why I'm asking the question: Do you know anything about that"?

Mr. Zagone answered, "I don't know if Rodney was pushing for me. I would assume if anybody were pulling for me it would have been Kelly Long. I know her and I don't know really know Rodney that well".

Atty Murphy asked if he knew him at all and Mr. Zagone stated he had met him maybe once but didn't know him. Mr. Murphy then went over a little bit of his previous fire chief responsibilities and level of experience relating to special events the lake might want to hold on the property i.e. fire prevention, fire code inspections, investigations, bomb squads, etc. and the fact that he does bring expertise with the budget and special events experience and things of that nature.

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Atty Murphy then turned to Mr. Modica and clarified he said he was on the Board of Adjusters for the MPC and asked him what that was. Mr. Modica explained, "We grant variances to people that did not meet requirements of the MPC...basically grace...We're actually the last straw...their last chance of getting what they need to build". Atty reiterated his career had been as a leader of young men as a coach and pointed out he had been the athletic director and understood working with financials of a budget. Modica added, "Not only the financials but keeping the peace and getting everyone to go the same direction".

Atty thanked him and turned to Mr. Marshall. He reaffirmed with him a lot of budget experience and a leader of men as well. He asked him to explain his role with the Civil Service work he is doing. Mr. Marshall answered he acted as the Branch Chief for eight bases and was responsible for all the fuel vehicles; meaning ground transportation, mechanics, the TMO folks... 'Basically making sure if they (the bases) have needs, we're getting them what they need to take care of War Fighter". Atty summarized that Marshall would be using his heavy understanding of logistics and experience with budgeting. He asked all candidates, since they all had experience with budgets, if they had any problem giving pushbacks if they felt like they didn't like the direction the board was going with the budget. He admitted he personally was 'ignorant about it (the board's budget) i.e. where they get their money from, what their budget is, and how they decide to spend the money'.

Mr. Marshall's summarized response included:

- The position is to represent the community
- If it doesn't look or sound right, it's worth bringing up and that includes not stopping with just one person
- Understanding that it takes a collective effort to put someone on the board and it will take more than one person to take someone off.
- Understanding followership means you can voice your concerns to the leader and still get in line with what the group leader decides to do after a fair decision is made and move forward with it as a whole team with what is best

Atty addressed the other candidates acknowledging they felt the same way and 'would not have a problem standing on principle if they felt there was some action or something going on against what they thought was in the best interest of their community'. They all agreed.

Alderman Lawrence thanked the four candidates for their time and coming to the workshop. The mayor thanked them as well. He called for any other questions before they adjourn. There being none, a motion was made by Alderman Lawrence and seconded by Alderman Brunson to adjourn.

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