

**Civic Association Annual Meeting Minutes**  
**February 2, 2026**

**Attendance:** 96 neighborhood residents and guests attended

**Call to Order, John Pray** (Civic Board President)

Meeting called to order at 6:38pm.

**Opening Prayer & Pledge of Allegiance, Steve Foster** (Community Bible Church)

- **Civic Association President (John Pray)**

John introduced the current board members and their responsibilities: Steve Foster (VP, Secretary), Darren & Aimee Rasche (Welcome & Publicity), Rick Martin (Newsletter & Social), Steve Long (Treasurer), Alicia Elam (Public Works), Beau Dennis (Phone Tree), Lynda Butler (Real Estate Reports), and Roy Hill (Crime Prevention Board).

John recounted the history of the civic association. He expressed thanks to the residents and reminded everyone how safe our neighborhood has been over the recent years. John expressed thanks to the new St. George leadership which has been very responsive to the needs of W-PP. There have been several code violations which have been dealt with very quickly.

Someone asked how much money we made from luminaries this past year. Rick Martin noted that we made about \$800 from luminary sales this past year

- **Together Baton Rouge**

Jennifer Carwell of Together Baton Rouge spoke to the W-PP residents. She asked residents to fill out a survey that was handed out to express what their concerns and priorities are.

- **Jefferson Highway Repair Project (Brendan Rush)**

Brendan is a W-PP neighbor who works with the LA DOTD. The construction is currently on Jefferson Hwy near Airline Hwy. They will be back in front of our neighborhood sometime around May 2026. Their work will take about five or six months. They will add a nice asphalt layer on top sometime around December 2026. Once this is complete, the maintenance for Jefferson Hwy will be turned over to the city parish. Brendan let residents know that if they have any questions then they can contact him in the neighborhood or use the website, dotd.la.gov.

- **Crime Prevention Board President (David Carnes)**

Board members include John Pray, Drew Merrill, Brendan Rush, and Roy Hill. Larry Johnson, our long-time treasurer, passed away last October. Jay Cristina is serving as our new treasurer.

Jay presented the 2025 income and expense report. Finances are submitted to the legislature in accordance with state law. There are 587 properties in W-PP which pay the \$125 parcel fee. 2025 funds were \$72,805. 80% of the received funds are used for crime prevention. 20% of the funds are used for neighborhood beautification. The current CPB balance is \$102,716. See attached financial report.

Someone asked why our patrol costs have gone down this past year. David answered that there are more crime prevention districts now in the area and so the number of patrols in our own neighborhood has decreased from previous years. David noted that we may need to start paying our deputies a little more. We may also add more crime cameras. Currently we have four cameras at the four entrances to the neighborhood. Our crime stats are notably down in 2025. There were two robberies, mostly of tools or lawn equipment. One of the W-PP neighbors reported that there was a break-in at his house and the deputies were initially responsive but then did not answer any texts or calls afterwards.

- **Dixon McMakin (LA State Representative)**

Dixon introduced himself to the residents. He noted that our W-PP meeting was one of the largest neighborhood meetings that he has attended. He stated that he will leave his cards so that if there are any issues, then people can contact him. Dixon says that he enjoys standing up for citizens and getting things done. Someone asked about the Sober Living homes in W-PP. There seem to be safety issues in these homes. Dixon noted that South Downs neighborhood has also expressed the same concerns and he is checking into what can be done. One resident noted that Sober Living homes are federally protected and it is difficult to get anything done with them. Someone asked about a mental health facility in EBR. Dixon stated that the legislature is looking into establishing another mental health facility in the city.

- **Rick Edmonds (LA State Senator)**

Rick noted that he is also very encouraged by the attendance at our civic association meeting. Rick stated that there is a new head of the DOTD who seems eager to get some things done. The City of St George was a fight for ten years. Rick worked hard to help St George get established and to get a bill on the ballot in May 2026 to form an independent school district. The bill needs to pass in the parish and in the state. Make sure to vote on May 16, 2026 or vote early. There is also a bill to provide a permanent raise to teachers and legislation is being worked on to lower our state income taxes, with the long-term goal to reduce our state income taxes to 0%.

- **Dustin Yates (Mayor of St George)**

Dustin noted his love for the W-PP neighborhood. He noted some of the happenings in 2025. He partnered with The Grove Rehab, Jennifer Richardson, and the sheriff's deputies in order to deal with the homeless population on Siegen Lane. Dustin went out first to meet the people on the streets. He offered to either get them into rehab or to get them a bus ticket to a family member. Within a few days, the homeless were off the streets. Sixty people entered into rehab or found a place to stay outside of the area. Thirteen felons were arrested. St George has also employed several of the homeless in public works projects. Dustin noted that group homes are federally protected, as long as they do things the right way. The process has already begun to rid the area of "bad players" who are not functioning according to the law or for the benefit of the residents. Dustin thanked Rick Edmonds for his help in getting St George established. St George residents were not just dealing with poor schools but also with poor services. Dustin stated that St George is intentionally reducing the bureaucracy so that you can have access to your city leaders.

Dustin updated the process of setting up an independent school district in St George. We do need to get the bill passed in the parish and in the state because it is a constitutional issue. Dustin is positive that we will get these bills passed. We want better schools with less bureaucracy.

Currently for every \$2 in taxes, only \$1 actually goes to education. The rest goes to bureaucracy. St George was able to establish itself without raising taxes. The school system in St George is currently 69% minority. Though critics say the St George initiative was racially-motivated, it is not true. Make sure to vote on May 16<sup>th</sup>! If this bill passes, then the governor establishes a temporary school superintendent and school board until elections can be held.

Dustin also announced that we do have a police chief who works with the sheriff's department. If you have problems, contact St. George. The city also hired a third-party service to handle traffic incidents so that our police do not need to deal with these traffic incidents. They project a 40% decrease in police having to deal with traffic accidents.

Dustin also noted that the city is putting up more crime cameras to further reduce crime.

A resident asked about homeless encampments in other places of the city. Dustin noted that the city has cleaned up forty encampments. They often move to other places. Dustin encouraged him to contact the chief of police.

A resident asked about the condition of roads in our neighborhood. Dustin stated that St George is noting the streets that need to be corrected.

A resident asked about Wards Creek and the drainage issues in W-PP. The city parish did nothing to really address this issue. There was a drainage pipe that had deteriorated. St George is addressing this. St George inherited 30-40 years of deferred maintenance. There were 2000 backordered work projects. St George is actively working on all of these issues. St George leaders have been on the streets during major rain events to see where the big issues are.

- **St George City Council (Drew Murrell)**

Drew again encouraged residents to vote on May 16<sup>th</sup>. The Westminster school is not going to open up unless St George gets its own school district.

Meeting adjourned at 8:13pm

Minutes submitted by Steve Foster