

BUDGET MESSAGE

Chairman Johnson, Honorable Members of the Assumption Parish Police Jury, I am pleased to present to you the budget for general operations and maintenance and capital improvement funds for the year beginning January 1, 2024.

Assumption Parish has five different types of funds (the general fund, special revenue funds, debt service funds, enterprise funds and capital project funds). The individual funds within each fund type are identified in this budget report.

Preparation of annual operating budgets for submittal to the Police Jury is the shared responsibility of the Secretary-Treasurer and the staff accountants, with the projection of program expenditures and needed improvements provided by operating department heads. The year 2024 annual budget was prepared based upon past operating history and the projected needs and changes for the upcoming fiscal period. After the budgets have been completed for each fund, they are submitted to the Police Jury President, whose responsibility is to review them. Once adjustments have been made by the Police Jury President, the budget is submitted to the Police Jury for final approval.

The following is a discussion of significant changes in select funds:

GENERAL FUND:

The General Fund accounts for all revenues and expenditures of the Assumption Parish Police Jury, which are not accounted for in other funds. The fund generally receives revenues from taxes, licenses and permits, intergovernmental grants, interest earnings, rents, and royalties. For the upcoming year of 2024, revenues are estimated to have a minimal decrease compared to those revenues received in 2023. Expenditures for the year 2024 are expected to increase as compared to those expenditures in 2023. A cost of living and merit increase for employees in the amount of 3% was factored in for 2024. Recreation allowances have remained steady at \$10,000 per year per ward in order to cover basic utilities/maintenance at current facilities. Cumulative allocations for recreation allowances have been removed from the 2023 budget and partially incorporated into the budget for 2024 resulting in increased expenditures. The annual allocation to the Chamber of Commerce is maintained at \$5,000 annually. The Criminal Court Fund is requiring a \$90,000 transfer from General Fund for 2024, same as that for 2023. The Office of Emergency Preparedness is requiring a \$195,000 transfer from General Fund for 2024, an increase of \$65,000 from 2023. The Consolidated Sewer District is requiring a \$125,000 transfer in 2024 and a \$138,000 in 2023 due to increased operational and maintenance costs. This trend is expected to increase in the future annually. The Community Development Office is requiring a transfer of \$247,648 as compared to \$237,248 in 2023 due to increased personnel hired in 2023. The General Fund has an estimated ending fund balance of \$908,558.

1% SALES TAX:

The 1% Sales Tax Fund accounts for revenues generated from the sales tax collections throughout the parish. Estimated revenues for the 2024 Sales Tax Fund are at \$3,005,189 which is slightly more than that received in prior years. Sales tax revenues have been on the increase for 3 years now. An allocation of

\$100,000 has been appropriated for possible building renovations along with an additional \$20,000 for possible jail renovations. A 3% cost of living and merit increase for employees was allocated. The Road & Bridge transfer remains steady at \$919,400. The 1% Sales Tax Fund has an estimated ending fund balance of \$4,923,908.

SOLID WASTE FUND (Enterprise Fund):

The Solid Waste Fund for 2024 should continue to experience increased expenditures. Revenues are expected at \$2,613,133 and expenditures at \$2,629,557. The residential garbage collection contract steadily increases year after year while collections do not. The estimated ending fund balance of the Solid Waste Fund is \$313,603. As recommended in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 & 2023, user service fees need to be increased. The fund will not continue to sustain itself at the current billing/collection rates. The only other alternative is to “close the gap” between the collections by the Assumption Parish Waterworks compared to the households billed for from Waste Pro. The new contract and distribution of carts by Waste Pro has not been successful in doing so. A meter rectification study has been ordered to assist with this but we are yet to receive the results.

CRIMINAL COURT FUND

The Criminal Court Fund for 2024 has anticipated revenues of \$207,682 with expenditures projected at \$312,658. This requires the General Fund to transfer funds into the Criminal Court Fund in order to cover the deficit. The transfer required from General Fund in 2024 is estimated at \$90,000.

LIBRARY FUND

The Library Fund has estimated revenues at \$1,296,974 and expenditures at \$1,006,768. The transfer from 1% Sales Tax into the Library Fund has been discontinued. The Library Fund has an estimated fund balance of \$3,546,844.

OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS (OHSEP)

The OHSEP Fund has estimated revenues for 2024 in the amount of \$819,481 with expenditures estimated at \$1,013,369. The General Fund transfer to the OHSEP fund is estimated at \$195,000 for 2024 as compared to \$130,000 in 2023. The OHSEP fund has an estimated ending fund balance of \$13,612.

1/4% SALES TAX – DRAINAGE:

The 1/4% Sales Tax Fund accounts for revenues generated from the sales tax collections throughout the parish. Estimated sales tax revenues for 2024 have increased from that of previous years to an estimated \$721,754. Drainage project allocations remain steady at \$275,000 for 2024. A 3% cost of living and merit increase for employees was allocated for 2024. Expenditures are estimated at \$1,094,111 resulting, therefore, in an estimated ending fund balance of \$769,977.

PUBLIC BLDGS/FACILITIES FUND:

The Public Buildings Fund has anticipated revenues for 2024 at \$317,474. Expenditures are expected to be \$466,331. The Public Buildings Fund has a declining fund balance of \$993,182. This is a result of the numerous amounts of "free usage" events allowed at the Assumption Parish Community Center.

CONSOLIDATED SEWER DISTRICT (Enterprise Fund):

Revenues for the Consolidated Sewer District for 2024 are estimated at \$112,822 with expenditures estimated at \$236,731. The age of the sewer districts is a direct result of the increased operational expenses. The estimated ending fund balance of the Consolidated Sewer District is \$32,521 which includes a \$125,000 transfer from the General Fund for 2024 and a \$138,000 transfer from General Fund for 2023. The amount of the transfer from the General Fund to the Sewer Districts is continually increasing annually and the trend is not expected to end. It is strongly recommended that user fees be increased or alternative ways are found to assist with funding this district.

ALL OTHER REMAINING FUNDS:

***** Revenues of all remaining funds are remaining steady, some with minimal increases, however, expenditures, are slightly increasing. Resulting, therefore, in an estimated total parish ending fund balance of \$ 26,178,514, not inclusive of Enterprise Fund transactions. Due to the anticipated decrease in the parish's ending fund balance, it is my professional recommendation that this board continue to operate in a "maintenance mode" of all existing programs, infrastructure, services, etc. There should be no expansion and/or increased services until further notice. This is especially important for all expenditures as it relates to the General Fund.

Respectfully submitted,



Kim M. Torres
Secretary-Treasurer