

ACADIANA REGIONAL JUVENILE JUSTICE DISTRICT MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2026 AT 1:00 PM
ST. MARY PARISH COURTHOUSE
FRANKLIN, LOUISIANA

CALL TO ORDER

Members in attendance (6 members present constituted a quorum)

1. Sheriff K.P. Gibson
2. Sheriff Ricky Edwards, (Ret.)
3. Judge F. Stanton Hardee
4. Armond Schwing
5. Sheriff Becket Breaux
6. Lt. Oscar West
7. Judge Jim Doherty, (Ret.)
8. Parish President Jessie Bellard

Absent Members:

1. Kenney Courville
2. Sheriff Charles Guillory
3. Judge Shaunn Callier-Harden

Guests:

1. Paul Governale, St. Mary Parish Government CAO
2. Sam Jones, St. Mary Parish President
3. Gary Driskell, St. Mary Sheriff
4. John Kahl, St. Mary Sheriff Chief Deputy
5. David Spencer, St. Mary Sheriff PIO

NOTE: Public Notice of the Meeting was posted by Lt. Oscar West at the place of meeting at 12:43 PM on Monday, January 12, 2026.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER 16, 2025 MEETING

The minutes were reviewed and approved. Motion to approve the Minutes was made by Sheriff K.P. Gibson and seconded by Sheriff Ricky Edwards, (Ret.). Motion carried unanimously.

ACCEPT APPOINTMENT TO FILL ST. MARTIN PARISH SEAT

The Board considered accepting the appointment of Sheriff Becket Breaux to fill the St. Martin Parish seat. A motion to accept the was made by Sheriff Ricky Edwards, (Ret.) and seconded by Sheriff K.P. Gibson. The motion carried unanimously.

ACCEPT APPOINTMENT TO FILL PARISH PRESIDENTS/POLICE JURIES SEAT

The Board considered accepting the appointment of Opelousas City Court Judge Shaunn Caillier-Harden to fill the Parish Presidents/Police Juries seat following the resignation of Judge Luke Abrusby, which was accepted at the December 16, 2025 meeting. A motion to accept the appointment was made by Judge Stanton Hardee and seconded by Sheriff Ricky Edwards, (Ret.). The motion carried unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF PUBLIC MEETING TO CONSIDER RESOLUTION ORDERING AND CALLING SALES TAX ELECTION

The Board made the required public announcement regarding its intent to consider a resolution ordering and calling an election to authorize the levy of a sales and use tax within the Acadiana Regional Juvenile

Justice District. The notice was read aloud as follows: a public meeting will be held on Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 1:00 PM at the St. Landry Parish Council Chambers, 131 Bellevue Street, Opelousas, Louisiana, at which time the Board plans to consider a resolution ordering and calling an election to authorize the levy of a sales and use tax within the Acadiana Regional Juvenile Justice District. No action was required for this item beyond making the announcement.

DISCUSSION – ELECTION FUNDING RESPONSIBILITIES AND GUIDANCE FROM LEGAL COUNSEL/SECRETARY OF STATE

The Board discussed guidance received from legal counsel regarding election costs and related responsibilities, including that additional confirmation from the Secretary of State was still pending. The Board also discussed legal advertising requirements and the need to obtain pricing and confirm the process for required publications across the parishes. It was noted that Foley & Judell is expected to attend the February 26, 2026 meeting.

DISCUSSION – PARISH OUTREACH STRATEGY PRIOR TO ELECTION

The Board discussed the importance of coordinated parish outreach and consistent messaging prior to the election. Members noted the need to educate the public on the purpose of the proposed facility and to clarify that the tax structure would not remain a permanent one-cent sales tax. Discussion included the need to engage police juries, parish leaders, judges, sheriffs, and law enforcement to build awareness and support, while recognizing that some officials may be hesitant to publicly support a tax measure during an election year.

DISCUSSION – KEY QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Board discussed common questions being raised in parishes, including the location of the proposed facility, whether females would be housed, how beds would be allocated across parishes, and how the facility would prioritize crimes of violence when capacity is limited. The Board discussed the need to develop consistent, clear responses for these questions.

DISCUSSION – ALTERNATIVE FACILITY OPTION AND SITE VISIT

The Board discussed an existing juvenile facility option in St. Martin Parish and agreed it should be evaluated as part of the District's planning. The Board scheduled a site visit for Friday, January 23, 2026 at 10:00 AM at 1815 Terrace Highway, St. Martin Parish, to tour the facility and gather additional information related to costs, capacity, and operational considerations. The Board agreed to gather additional information, including operating cost figures and insurance-related details, prior to making any decisions or adjustments to the current election strategy.

DISCUSSION – RECORDING/POSTING REQUIREMENTS

The Board discussed requirements for recording or livestreaming meetings and the importance of ensuring recordings are posted appropriately for public access, including through the District's website, for future meetings.

LOCATION, DATE, AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 1:00 PM at the St. Landry Parish Council Chambers, 131 Bellevue Street, Opelousas, Louisiana.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned following the completion of agenda items.