

## BUDGET MESSAGE

Chairman Blanchard, 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, 2026.

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 2026 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. Expenditures for the year 2026 are expected to have a slight increase as compared to those expenditures in 2025 while the revenues are expected to decrease. A cost of living and merit increase for employees in the amount of 3% was factored in for 2026; however no action has been taken by the board to actually give these increases. 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 2025 budget and partially incorporated into the budget for 2026 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 \$151,000 transfer from General Fund for 2026. The Office of Emergency Preparedness is requiring a \$190,000 transfer from General Fund for 2026. The Consolidated Sewer District is requiring a \$108,773 transfer in 2026 due to increased operational and maintenance costs even after a user rate increase effective January 1, 2025. The Community Development Office is requiring a transfer of \$335,973 as compared to \$274,607 in 2025 due to increased staffing. The General Fund has an estimated ending fund balance of \$837,708. It has continually been recommended to the Police Jury that cuts have to be made. The General Fund cannot continue to operate in this manner moving forward. All suggestions presented to the board by the Secretary-Treasurer have been denied except for the non-allocation of wage increases for 2026 for employees.

### **1% SALES TAX:**

The 1% Sales Tax Fund accounts for revenues generated from the sales tax collections throughout the parish. Estimated revenues for the 2026 Sales Tax Fund are at \$3,751,022 which is a slight decline from that received in 2025. 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, however no action has been taken by the board to actually give these increases. The Road & Bridge transfer remains steady at \$919,400. The transfer out to CDF has increased to \$143,435 from \$79,582 due to increased personnel. The 1% Sales Tax Fund has an estimated ending fund balance of \$7,847,408.

### **SOLID WASTE FUND (Enterprise Fund):**

The Solid Waste Fund for 2026 should continue to experience increased expenditures. Revenues are expected at \$3,148,433 and expenditures at \$2,796,557. The residential garbage collection contract steadily increases year after year. The estimated ending fund balance of the Solid Waste Fund is \$943,734 as a result of a user fee increase on January 1, 2025.

### **CRIMINAL COURT FUND**

The Criminal Court Fund for 2026 has anticipated revenues of \$229,897 with expenditures projected at \$404,384. 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 2026 is estimated at \$175,000. This transfer from the General Fund will continue to increase as a new Judge has been elected for Division F and she chooses to be housed in Assumption Parish. A request has been made to the Judicial System to raise the costs of court fees to assist in the deficit, to no avail.

### **LIBRARY FUND**

The Library Fund has estimated revenues at \$1,479,847 and expenditures at \$1,024,340. The Library Board continues to operate under a balanced budget, thus, their fund balance continues to increase. The Police Jury has agreed that the Library should handle all of their maintenance matters in house without the Police Jury staff having to handle. The Library Fund has an estimated fund balance of \$4,682,594.

### **OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS (OHSEP)**

The OHSEP Fund has estimated revenues for 2026 in the amount of \$832,814 with expenditures estimated at \$1,038,173. The General Fund transfer to the OHSEP fund is estimated at \$190,000 for 2026 which is an increase of \$20,000 from 2025. The OHSEP fund has an estimated ending fund balance of \$43,192.

### **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 2026 have decreased from that of previous years to an estimated \$812,038. Drainage project allocations remain steady at \$275,000 for 2026 as in past years.

Expenditures for 2026 are estimated at \$1,184,401 resulting, therefore, in an estimated ending fund balance of \$909,338. The Secretary-Treasurer has again requested that the maintenance and expenditures within the Drainage fund be cut back. The fund is expending more money than it receives and cannot sustain itself at this level. The Police Jury disagrees with cutting back on maintenance as they feel it is necessary even though the funds do not exist to fund it.

#### **PUBLIC BLDGS/FACILITIES FUND:**

The Public Buildings Fund has anticipated revenues for 2026 at \$388,227, down from that of 2025. Expenditures are expected to be \$458,710. The Public Buildings Fund has an estimated declining fund balance of \$1,014,399. This is a result of the numerous amounts of “free usage” events allowed at the Assumption Parish Community Center resulting in increased wear and tear, cleaning and maintenance of the facility. This “free usage” has also been recommended on several occasions to cease. The Police Jury chooses to continue operating in this manner despite the impact on the budget.

#### **CONSOLIDATED SEWER DISTRICT (Enterprise Fund):**

Revenues for the Consolidated Sewer District for 2026 are estimated at \$151,076 with expenditures estimated at \$259,849. 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 \$35,000 which includes a \$108,773 transfer from the General Fund for 2026. User fee rates have increased to \$33.00 per household effective January 1, 2025. However, this increase still does not absorb the steady rising operational/maintenance costs. Funds have been allocated from an external source to modify/upgrade the sewer systems. This rehab should start early February, 2026. The Police Jury anticipates that after the upgrade of the systems, the operational/maintenance costs should reduce significantly.

#### **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 \$ 31,485,707, 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 operate in a “maintenance mode” of all existing programs, infrastructure, services, etc. There should be no expansion and/or increased services until further notice. For the General Fund and Drainage Fund, I specifically recommend switching to a “cut back” mode versus that of “maintenance mode.” The ending fund balance of these two funds have been on a downward spiral for years now. We have now reached a level that requires serious attention and cut backs.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Kim M. Torres  
Secretary-Treasurer