



From the desk of our Board Chair

January 9, 2019



**Dear Members of the Metro Council:**

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the East Baton Rouge Council on Aging, I want to extend our gratitude for your support of the Agency and the services we provide to residents within your districts. As I reflect on 2018, it is evident to us that the agency has done phenomenal work at meeting the needs of seniors. Frankly, COA staff's ability to meet the exponential growth in need and requests for services has been above and beyond our expectations as a Board. We also acknowledge that whether it be delivering over 400,000 meals to homes, providing over 100,000 meals in 25 senior centers across our parish, or distributing over 50,000 pounds of food through the Lotus Food Pantry, none of it would be possible without the tax millage.

It has come to our attention that this afternoon, an item will be introduced on the Council's agenda to form a committee to review the tax millage and make recommendations to the Council related to the funding of said millage. As a Board, we oppose any actions by the Metro Council which would reduce the funds East Baton Rouge Parish voters approved to be allocated to the East Baton Rouge Council on Aging for senior services.

Based on the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with East Baton Rouge Parish, we have provided quarterly financial and programmatic reports to the Parish Council that thoroughly explain revenue and expenditures. This system was requested and put into place by you for accountability purposes. We have worked hard to meet and or exceed your expectations. We believe creating this committee to specifically review our Agency would seemingly be duplicative of the existing processes and procedures which are already in place as you requested.

Additionally, let me emphasize to you that though the agency received funds which exceeded everyone's expectations, the demand for senior services has skyrocketed to the point that senior needs in this Parish still aren't being fully met at our current income level. A recent study by the United Way revealed that an overwhelming majority of Baton Rouge residents are struggling to maintain their household. This is true for our senior residents and sometimes exacerbated by their inability to properly care for themselves. And, as the "baby boomers" reach retirement in droves, the number of citizens in the Parish requiring help does too. That's where we come in.

This past year we spent 9.5 Million of the 9 million in tax millage received. A cursory review of our books reveals that there is NO surplus as previously reported. Furthermore, our current budget, which you are privy to, includes the unexpected additional tax revenue and has been dedicated to senior services, capital improvements to senior centers, building new administrative offices, building a new commercial kitchen, and funding for renovations to the City owned 1701 Main Street Senior Center.

We welcome members of the Parish Council to review our quarterly reports and engage us with questions on how we allocate millage dollars. However, we feel the formation of this committee is redundant and we suggest that any recommendations that reduces funding to our Agency that was allocated as a result of the voter approved tax millage should be denied.

Sincerely,

*Jennifer Moisant*

Jennifer Moisant  
Board Chairwoman  
East Baton Rouge Council on Aging