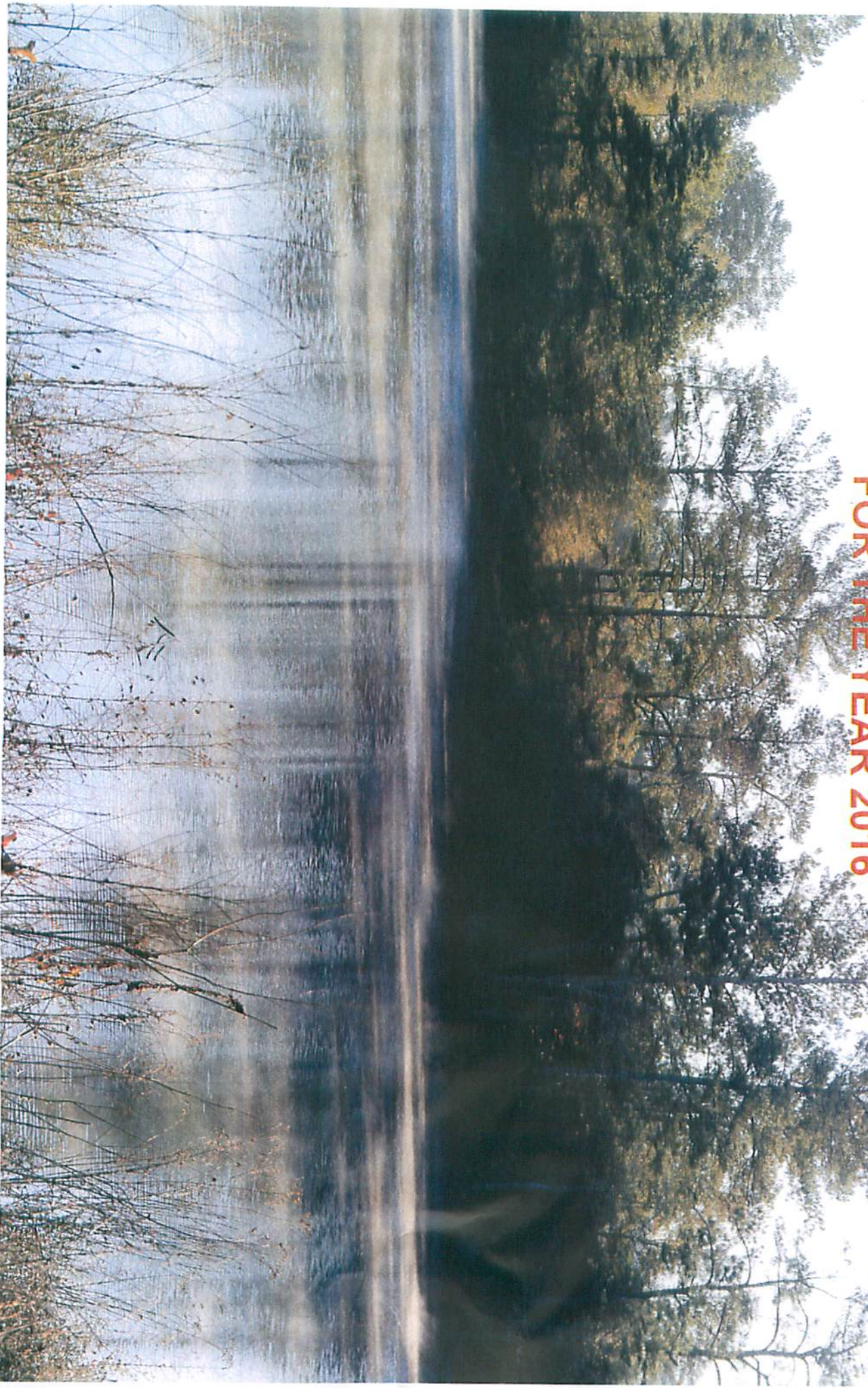
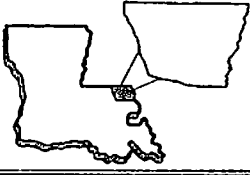


**WASHINGTON PARISH GOVERNMENT
OPERATING AND CAPITAL OUTLAY BUDGET
FOR THE YEAR 2016**



BUDGET MESSAGE



WASHINGTON PARISH

Richard N. Thomas, Jr., Parish President

Fax (985) 839-7828 • E-mail: rthomas@wpgov.org

* * * * *
www.wpgov.org

December 14, 2015

Washington Parish Council Members
Franklinton, Louisiana 70438

Honorable Council Members:

In accordance with the requirements of section 5-03 of the parish charter, I respectfully submit to you for your review and consideration a proposed balanced operating budget for fiscal year 2016.

This has been a year of financial growth for Washington Parish Government. We have completed the resurfacing of over 31 miles of parish roads, at a cost of \$955,000., or approximately \$31,000 per mile, this is quite an accomplishment and cost savings. In January of 2015, we assumed management of the Washington Parish Housing Authority with contracted assistance from the Tangipahoa Parish Housing Section 8 Executive Director, much progress has been made with this program in providing affordable housing assistance for citizens of Washington Parish. With the continued collections of the 1/3 of 1% sales tax providing dedicated funding, for cost of the criminal, civil and juvenile justice system expenditures statutorily required to be funded by parish government, our Criminal Court Fund's deficit balance will be positive for the first time in many years. We have worked diligently with all agencies throughout the year to assure compliance with the adopted budget and in preparations for 2016.

Some of the highlights of the 2016 budget will include:

- Continuation of an "in house" road resurfacing program, with an emphasis on improving drainage, applying a bituminous/chip seal coat to wearing roadway surfaces and maintaining / replacing bridges.
- Hospitalization insurance premiums increased 4%, which is the first increase in 4 years.
- Sales tax revenue is budgeted on 2015 projected actual which indicates an increase of approximately 13% over the prior year.

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- Parochial Employees Retirement System employer match rate decreases from 14.5% to 13.0%; District Attorney Retirement System decreases from 7.0 to 3.5% for employer match contributions.
- Ad Valorem taxes do not reflect a significant change for 2016, therefore, revenues are budgeted off the 2015 millage report from the Washington Parish Assessor. 2016 is a reassessment year, however, it is too early to reasonably estimate the impact on potential revenues.
- Several Hazard Mitigation Grant Projects are approaching construction phase in the coming year, from the "hardening" of Parish School buildings, to replacing old wooden 1 span bridges with engineered piping/culverts, to elevation of homes in recurring flood areas. We could see as much as \$7.9 million in federal funds filtering to the parish for these projects.

We, as an administration, welcome and need public and council input in all areas. As Washington Parish President, I am committed to demonstrating leadership, responsibility and best management practices to ensure safeguarding of assets that have been entrusted to me by our citizens. That being said, I am submitting this budget presentation as our best estimation of revenues and expenditures, for all funds, for proposed operations during the fiscal year 2016.

Please be advised that Donna Graham, Director of Finance, and I are available for the discussion of the budget at any time. We hope that you will review the budget favorably and approve it accordingly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard N. Thomas, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Richard N. Thomas, Jr.
Parish President

RNT/dg