Tax renewal failures could sink Lafayette Parish budget

Lafayette voters in April shot down two parishwide tax renewals: a 2.34-mill property tax for the Courthouse Complex and a 2.06-mill property tax for operations and maintenance at the Correctional Center.

BY RICHARD BUDGENS
rburgess@theadvocate.com

The future of parks, road work and drainage projects in unincorporated areas of Lafayette Parish could be in jeopardy after the failure of the renewal efforts.

Voters shot down two parishwide tax renewals in April. The first was a 2.34-mill property tax for the parish courthouse complex and a 2.06-mill property tax for operations and maintenance at the parish jail.

The $11 million generated annually from the new taxes would be dedicated to critical infrastructure projects, including road improvements and drainage systems.

The parish's budget for the current fiscal year, ending June 30, is $528 million. A previous budget, adopted in 2019, was $492 million.

Voters also rejected two additional tax renewals in April. One would have added a 0.4-mill property tax to the parish's general fund, and the other would have added a 0.2-mill property tax to the parish's public safety fund.

Parish Council President Joel Robichaux said the council has a responsibility to provide essential services to its residents, and that includes maintaining roads and drainage systems.

"We're looking at all our options," Robichaux said. "We're trying to find ways to fund these projects, but we need the support of the community."