

April 9, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT DURING ROLL CALL: John Clark, Jack Harris, Lionel Bailey, Clint Cointment, Kenneth Dawson, Brin Ferlito, LeeAnn Fitch, Cindy O'Neal, Gary O'Neal, Fred Raiford

MEMBERS ABSENT DURING ROLL CALL: Ryan Byrd, Edwin Parker, Rick Webre

ARRIVED AFTER ROLL CALL: Webre entered the meeting at 10:15 am during ARBC Executive Director's Report.

ALSO PRESENT: Bren Haase, CPRA; Ed Knight, LADOTD; Monica S. Gorman and Blaine Sheets, PLD; Executive Director Rachael Lambert, ARBC, Executive Secretary Toni Guitrau, ARBC; Legal Counsel Larry Bankston, Bankston & Associates/ARBC

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by ARBC President Clark.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call: See above.

4. Minutes – There were no public comments.

The Board unanimously approved a motion by Cointment, seconded by Bailey to approve the March 12, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes, as presented.

5. Financial Statements – There were no public comments.

The Board reviewed a financial summary of the month ending March 31, 2024. Financial Statements will be available at the May 14, 2024, ARBC meeting.

6. Report by ARBC President – There were no public comments.

- Clark reported on a meeting spearheaded by ARBC Commissioner Delatte (Livingston Parish President) with Senator Cassidy's staff who works directly with the USACE. The meeting was regarding flood risk reduction projects in the lower Amite River. This is one of the sections of the river that is filled with sand and silt due to neglect for more than 50 years. Clark said this is the USACE's jurisdiction not the parishes. In absence of the USACE not doing anything, the ARBC recognizes the need as well as other projects including the Amite River Diversion Canal Weir, the Bayou Manchac Flood Risk Reduction Project, etc. At that meeting it was discussed the need for Corps permit approval, loss of shoreline, habitat, etc. The materials removed could be used to restore the shoreline. Livingston Parish has scheduled another meeting next month regarding this matter.

7. Report by ARBC Executive Director Rachael Lambert – There were no public comments.

Lambert provided a presentation updating the board on the following:

Region 9 Update

- Round 2 Awardee Kick-off meetings have started. Taylor Bayou (City of Walker) John LeBlanc Detention & Lower Bayou Conway (Ascension) and Comite North and South Improvements (E. Feliciana)
- Provided a list of Round 2 Ineligible Project Application & Descriptions
- Watershed Plan Activities
 - Regional Risk Mapping
 - Stakeholder Mapping
 - Engagement & Communication
- Master Plan
 - T&M vs. Lump Sum
 - Reviewed Scope of Services. A draft is in the Board's packet for review and comments.
- LWI \$100M Allocation: Discussed approval of projects for funding and the Bayou Manchac Project Timeline.

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE AMITE RIVER BASIN DRAINAGE & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Location: Livingston Parish Council Chambers, 20355 Government Blvd., Livingston, La 70754

- Resolution 1177. An ARBC resolution regarding the Bayou Manchac Project was emailed to the Board and is provided in the Board's packet. Bankston has since informed the Board of Act 490 of 2022 regarding the section "Within the areas of the district that are concurrent with the limits of the PLD as set forth in R.S. 38:291(L), the PLD shall have primary jurisdiction. The ARBC shall not initiate any project or program within the limits of the PLD without consulting with and receiving approval from the board of commissioners of PLD." Lambert deferred to Bankston to answer any questions from the Board regarding this matter.
- In the Board packet, Lambert provided her email to Representative Wilder regarding the ARBC Capital Outlay Request. She also provided a current Bill Status Report for 2024 Regular Legislative Session regarding levees, flooding, etc. as they are being tracked by Association of Levee Boards. Haase asked that any updates regarding the schedules for Round 1 projects be passed onto the Board each month, if possible.
- Senator Eddie Lambert addressed the Board stating that he has been involved with the Bayou Manchac Project since 2016. He said everything pretty much drains from EBR onto Ascension through Bayou Manchac. It is a direct common boundary. He hopes the project can move forward and some confusion can be cleared up.
- Mayor Johnson with the City of St. Gabrielle was recognized.
- LFMA Annual Conference is April 17-19 in Lafayette.
- CRDC Project Status. Real Estate Status: 85 out of the required 89 parcels acquired. Utility Relocations Status: 45 out of the 60 relocations are complete. Bridge Status: LA 964 is 55% complete. LA 67 is 59% complete. LA 19 is under assembly period. Monthly updates can be found on the ARBC website at www.amitebasin.org as provided by the USACE.

8. Report by Legal Counsel

- SB 395 by Senator Foil. This bill provides for the ARBC boundaries revision as a result of Act 490 of 2022. Bankston will attend the hearing tomorrow at the State Capitol. He reported on Senator Hodges' concurrent resolution – Task Force for CRDC Project and other.
- Regarding Act 490 of 2022 – jurisdictional authority. Bankston explained the following section, "Within the areas of the district that are concurrent with the limits of the PLD as set forth in R.S. 38:291(L), the PLD shall have primary jurisdiction. The ARBC shall not initiate any project or program within the limits of the PLD without consulting with and receiving approval from the board of commissioners of PLD." He also said that in Act 490, ARBC can receive technical assistance from the DOTD, CPRA and PLD. In the event there are requests for technical assistance, the legislation provides that individual entities can seek reimbursement for any cost they may have if ARBC calls on them to do technical aspects. Reimbursement can be from ARBC and/or from the CEA where funds were allocated through CPRA. Haase said regarding reimbursement, CPRA assisted the ARBC in the fixing of the new boundaries and the assistance with the Annual Plan. The cost for the 2 tasks were from the initial appropriation. The funds reimbursed went to the 2 contractors not CPRA staff or admin. Cointment questioned why legislation was passed restricting ARBC from performing projects without consent and approval from another commission. He said that ARBC cannot reach its full potential with legislation holding it back. He requested a further legal explanation. Bankston said that in Section M, there is jurisdictional overlap between ARBC and PLD. In the legislation it states that in the areas that are concurrent within the limits of PLD, and where PLD is the primary. He believes the intent was for ARBC, PLD and ARBC, CPRA etc., to work together on projects. Cointment requested the next agenda have an item to get this legislation changed. Senator Eddie Lambert responded to the Board regarding the question as to why the legislation was passed. He said at the time the ARBC had not been doing what they thought it should be doing. He said the Pontchartrain Levee District was the original jurisdiction of this area so that is why it was done. Requesting this change would be like trying to take away authority from PLD. The legislature wanted a situation where the entities would work together to get projects done by using the expertise of multiple Boards. Cointment said he believes this is one organization overpowering the other.
Public Comment: Paul Barras asked if anything being discussed is available to the public. ARBC Executive Director Lambert said the board packet will be available following the meeting. O'Neal said on www.watershed.la.gov much of the information can be found. Webre complimented ARBC Executive Director Lambert on the map she created in ESRI that is currently on the ARBC website. Lambert did it in-house and it has all the current projects being worked on. Webre hopes to see all flood control infrastructure added within the region.

9. Old Business – There were no public comments.

- LWI-OCD Region 9 Update: Presentation by Micaela Coner, Director of Economic Development & Infrastructure Programs & Genea Lathers, Recovery & Mitigation Manager.
 - Louisiana OCD. \$100M Allocation process update: CEA Approved - January 2024. Next steps include ARBC to complete project applications and submit them in IGX. The LWI Council Working Group Members will review project applications submitted per CDBG-MIT guidelines. OCD will make a formal announcement on behalf of the LWI Council of projects approved for funding.
 - Round 2 Conditionally Awarded Projects: For those applicants choosing to have LWI complete the H&H, a draft schedule will be shared. This will indicate when preliminary design should begin, which includes procurement of an engineering firm as a predecessor. For those applicants choosing to have their own engineers complete the H&H, the LWI staff will introduce the H&H Report Checklist and submission requirements. The deadline to submit the completed Round 2 Application is August 31, 2024.
 - Round 2 Region 9 projects – Total Allocation \$42M. Project Names, Taylor Bayou Regional Improvements, City of Walker; John Leblanc Detention Improvements, Lower Bayou Conway Drainage Improvements, Ascension Parish; Drainage Improvements in East Feliciana South of Highway 10, Drainage Improvements in East Feliciana North of Highway 10, Kennedy Heights Drainage Improvements, City of Gonzales. Total \$41,988,768.00.
 - Round 2 Allocation process update: The LWI Council Working Group Members will review Round 2 project applications prioritized by ARBC per CDBG-MIT guidelines. OCD will make a formal announcement on behalf of the LWI Council of the project approved for funding.
 - Discussed Round 2 LMI requirements for Region 9 that were not required in Round 1.
 - Discussed the 3.7M withdrawn from Gonzales that is now available in the Budget.
 - Discussed that there is a cancelled project policy if needed.
- Presentation by Pontchartrain Levee District “PLD” Executive Director Monica Salins Gorman.
 - Provided an overview of the history of the PLD. Created in 1895 by act of the legislature. Jurisdiction all that part of the parish of EBR lying south of the City of Baton Rouge and all of those parts of the parishes of Iberville, Ascension, St. James, St. John the Baptist and St. Charles, lying east of the Mississippi River. Total Budget for 2024-2025 is \$17,676,968. Current PLD projects: West Shore Lake Pontchartrain – St. Charles/St. John the Baptist, West Shore Lake Pontchartrain – St. James Parish, Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity, Hurricane and Storm Dame Risk Reduction System – St. Charles Parish (East Bank), East Bank Mississippi River Levees.
 - Pontchartrain Levee District Led Projects through partnerships with USACE, CPRA or local government: Laurel Ridge Levee Extension, Amite River and Tributaries Study, Fish Bayou Control Structure, Amite River Diversion Canal Weir, LA 22 Gapping Project, Bayou Boyle Regional Detention, Baton Rouge Seepage Control 0 USACE Contract, Ascension Storm Surge, Bayou Manchac Regional Flood Ridge Reduction, Upper Amite River Restoration.
 - Gorman said the Bayou Manchac Regional Flood Risk Reduction Project commenced in 2021 with Letters of Support from EBR, Iberville and Ascension Parishes. Phase 1 is clearing and snagging, Phases 2 includes 5 channelization projects. Phase 1, \$1.5M and Phase 2, \$82M. The goal was to identify low hanging fruit plan for large-scale projects, and eventually determine a maintenance plan. All phases were modeled to develop BCR funding. 3.25 BCR was calculated for Phases 1 and 2. Results indicated up to 20 inches of water surface elevation reduction, impacting a footprint of 79,510 structures. PLD received letters of support from the three parishes and requests to move forward with funding and permitting from state legislators. In total, PLD received project support from the following entities: Ascension, EBR, Iberville, Livingston Parishes, CPRA, DOTD, Congressman Graves, Senator Cleo Fields, Senator Lambert, Senator Price, Former Speaker Schexnayder, Representative Brass and Representative Bacala.
 - To date, PLD has submitted nearly \$116M in funding outside of the \$30M in LWI funds that were referenced by ARBC in their annual plan. PLD has the necessary funds and can support the matches required for grants. PLD is prepared to fund Phase 1 with its own funds, in the interest of their taxpayers and for quick implementation. “Within the areas of the district that are concurrent with the limits of the PLD as set forth in R.S. 38:291(L), the PLD shall have primary jurisdiction. The ARBC shall not initiate any project or program within the limits of the PLD without consulting with and receiving approval from the board of commissioners of PLD.” Additionally, ARBC may request technical assistance from PLD regardless of

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE AMITE RIVER BASIN DRAINAGE & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
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whether the area affected is within the boundaries of the PLD. The CPRA and the PLD retain the right to be reimbursed for the reasonable cost of its assistance.

- Gorman presented a (May 2021-March 2024) Bayou Manchac Project Timeline to the Board. She said ARBC voted on #1 projects in May of 2023, and only EBR and Iberville Parishes listed Bayou Manchac as their #1 project. In November 2023, PLD met with EBR Parish to review the project and discuss funding opportunities. On January 16, 2024, PLD met with Senator Lambert to discuss project details and funding options. On January 17, 2024, PLD met with Governor Landry's staff and Senator Lambert to review the project and funding options.

- Gorman was in DC attending meetings at the time of the March 12th ARBC meeting. She was questioned and notified of decisions made by ARBC at its March 12th meeting regarding the Bayou Manchac Project by the reporter from The Advocate. PLD was disappointed that they were not notified by ARBC beforehand or following the ARBC meeting. Gorman reminded the Board that PLD is a member of the ARBC Board. She said it has always been the intention of PLD to work toward the success of this new ARBC and that remains the same today. They will work with ARBC in a manner that is in line with the success of both agencies and the project. This matter concerning the Bayou Manchac Project was discussed in detail. They agreed to set up a meeting to discuss this further.

10. New Business – There were no public comments.

11. General or Non-Agenda Item(s) Public Comments: Mayor Johnson, City of St. Gabriel, discussed the Bayou Manchac Project and its importance to St. Gabriel.

12. The Board unanimously approved a motion by O'Neal, seconded by Bailey, to adjourn the meeting at 12:03 pm.

APPROVED:

/s/John Clark/ARBC President
Date: May 14, 2024

/s/ Toni B. Guitrau, Executive Secretary